



PUB REVAMP IN NEW STORE PLAN

Report by Richard Guttridge

OUTBUILDINGS next to a pub in Wollescote will be demolished and replaced with a Co-op store, under new plans.

Proposals for the Hare and Hounds in Wynnall Lane have been put forward by store developer New River Retail.

However, company bosses said as well as the shop being built on part of the car park, 'a substantial new investment' would also be spent revamping the pub to help create more than 20 jobs.

But Cradley and Wollescote ward's Councillor Richard Body said he was concerned by the potential impact on traffic.

He said: "I live less than 200 yards away from there and I know when interest first came about a year ago residents weren't happy."

"I think it is too close to the junction and has extremely limited visibility."

"Obviously I'll be objecting and will be advising residents how to do that as well."

"This is a pub that relies on the use of its car park and if people can't park they won't go there."

According to planning documents submitted to the council, the 326 sq m store would be built on part of the existing car park.

The application also seeks the demolition of existing outbuildings and the subsequent erection of a single storey side and rear extension to the pub off Brook Holloway.

The developers described the parking lot as 'currently under-utilised'.

Convenience

Under the scheme a total of 28 parking spaces, including disabled and parent-child spaces, will be provided - 15 for the shop and 10 for the pub.

A spokesman for New River Retail, which has owned the Hare and Hounds since 2013, said: "We have submitted plans to Dudley Council which aim to inject substantial new investment into the site."

"The new convenience store is only part of the story as we have been working with the current licensees to improve and upgrade the pub."

"The proposal is to incorporate the current games-function room into the pub so it can be accessed without having to go outside and internalising the toilets along with a decorative upgrade to the existing facilities and new external decorations and signage."

"The refurbishment would be the first piece of major investment in the Hare and Hounds for many years and underlines New River's commitment to its pubs portfolio."

The design and access statement concludes: "The development is accessible by a choice of means of transport, will be easily accessible on foot to the surrounding residential area, and will deliver positive benefits in terms of improving the vitality of the area, boosting the local economy."

PAINT FIRM BOSS TO TALK BUSINESS WITH TYCOON



Cradley Heath's Paint 360 recycled paint firm boss Lee Cole, right, receives his prize from tycoon Richard Branson and his daughter Holly

A CRADLEY Heath businessman is to visit tycoon Richard Branson at his home on his Caribbean island paradise after winning a competition.

Lee Cole will travel to Necker Island in the British Virgin Islands next year to get business advice from the Virgin group founder.

Mr Cole, who has a paint recycling business, won a Virgin Media Business-backed competition for firms prioritising environmental awareness and profit.

The Paint 360 boss was named winner of the Impact Award at a glittering ceremony

in London, where Richard Branson's eldest daughter Holly presented him with the personal invite to stay on Necker Island.

"This is a fantastic opportunity as there is so much to learn from people like Richard Branson. I feel honoured by the award."

"It isn't often you get a chance to make money and do the right thing, but that is what we do," said Mr Cole.

It was one of four special awards recognising businesses as part of Virgin Media Business VOOM 2016, the UK and Ireland's biggest and most valuable pitch competition.

Lee's firm employs 14 people and was hailed for producing high quality paint containing 80 per cent recycled content and for its impressive business model with sales growing year on year.

"There is nothing sexy about paint but the problem of waste paint is a very real one," said Mr Cole.

"We haven't found the solution but we are part of a solution and that is a wonderful thing."

He and his business partner David Francis established Paint 360 three years ago.

SCHOOL

Mobile classroom bid for more space

A PRIMARY school is set to expand with an application to erect a temporary double mobile classroom.

Newfield Park Primary School on Whittingham Road, Halesowen, has submitted the plans to Dudley Council.

As well as the two classrooms, the new temporary unit will provide toilet facilities and storage. There will be a new intercom, gate and CCTV installed as part of the plans, with a concrete pathway, timber steps and landing.

The school caters for about 400 pupils aged between four and 11 years.

SHOPS

Extra parking in the town centre

NEW parking spaces are being created around Halesowen's Cornbow Shopping Centre.

Spaces will be made available to shoppers on Great Cornbow, which was mostly governed by double-yellow lines. The changes mean shoppers can park for free for up to 45 minutes.

Dudley Council said the changes followed concerns from traders about a lack of parking impacting on shops. The changes come into force tomorrow (Friday).

COUNCIL

Move to start charge for crossing patrols

A REPORT on saving money for Dudley Council has suggested charging primary schools for the cost of running crossing patrols.

The council, which is facing huge cuts in Government funding, has discussed at cabinet level the proposals to move to a 'cost neutral service by re-charging schools for the cost of providing school crossing patrols'.

The move could save the council as much as £260,000 a year for the next three years but opposition at the Labour-run council labelled the idea 'a tax on road safety'.

INSIDE

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Police misconduct probe after suicide

FOUR West Midlands Police officers will face misconduct investigations after the suicide of a vulnerable missing man in the Black Country.

An Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) investigation into the death of Kazimierz Radloff, from Dudley, has ruled three of the force's constables and an acting inspector have cases to answer for misconduct.

Force failings meant the officers did not originally treat Mr Radloff as a vulnerable missing person and chances were missed 'to escalate the search' for him, according to the police watchdog.

Mr Radloff, aged 64, was found hanged in West Bromwich on July 6 last year and an inquest in August found he had committed suicide.

Two days before his body was found, relatives told police that he had indicated he intended to take his own life.

The IPCC's investigation found police initially treated him as someone in breach of bail conditions rather than as a vulnerable missing person.

Checks

A series of failings by police officers during the investigation were highlighted in the report.

An officer failed to tell his colleague that Mr Rad-

loff had threatened to harm himself, while another officer did not carry on background checks on him which would have revealed he was a suicide risk.

The IPCC ruled that another officer failed to launch a missing person investigation despite knowing Mr Radloff had threatened to take his own life.

Following the IPCC's investigation, the force concluded three of the four officers had a case to answer over gross misconduct. But the IPCC said there was no indication that earlier intervention by police would have prevented Mr Radloff's suicide. West Midlands Police declined to comment further.

Community college put into special measures

A SCHOOL in Brierley Hill has been put into special measures after a damning Ofsted report.

Inspectors from the education watchdog have criticised Thorns Community College, saying there are serious failings in safeguarding at the school which has 1,068 pupils.

They also highlighted the standard of teaching as 'inconsistent'. The school was rated as 'inadequate' overall and in 'effectiveness of leadership' and 'personal development, behaviour and welfare'.

Inspectors say it requires improvement for 'quality of teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes for pupils'. They say: 'Staff training in safeguarding does not reflect the most recent legislation. In addition, at times, insufficient action, or recording of action, has been taken to support the most vulnerable pupils.'

Principal Andy Cox said he accepted Ofsted's findings and efforts had been made to tackle the problems highlighted.

Improved

The inspectors have also said: 'The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school has improved since the previous inspection but it is not yet consistently good. Pupils make increased progress as a result of better teaching but variations remain for some groups of pupils. Senior leaders know that there is more to do.'

'Safeguarding systems are inadequate. Only a small number of pupils say they are aware of bullying taking place at the school. However, some parents have reservations about how the school responds to their concerns.'

Principal Mr Cox said: 'We accept the findings from Ofsted, some of which are related to issues in the way we kept records, others to student attendance rates. They have been, for the most part, quickly resolved. We have also recently made appointments to increase the capacity of the leadership team to continue to drive forward improvements in the quality of lessons and in our results.'

'The safety, wellbeing and education of all pupils at Thorns remains our highest priority, and we will work together to continually raise standards at this college.'

'I urge everyone connected with Thorns to read the report in its entirety.'

Grannies join sunshine carnival fun



Dancing grannies took to the streets of Stourbridge town centre thanks to the Fizzogs trio Jackie, Sue and Deb

STOURBRIDGE Carnival has been hailed as a 'fantastic' community occasion after the weekend festivities.

Councillor Nick Barlow, Wollaston and Stourbridge, said the event on Saturday had shown the town at its best.

Hundreds packed into the town centre to enjoy street entertainment and market stalls.

Among the acts to wow crowds were Black Country comedy troupe The Fizzogs, whose dancing gran-

nies are fast becoming carnival favourites.

Councillor Barlow said: 'It was fantastic, the weather was on our side and there was a great turnout.'

'There were lots of good stall and activities. It was thoroughly enjoyable.'

'The carnival has been going for such a long time but has changed over the years.'

'It's a celebration of the town and the locality and the local environment.'

'I think it's great that people take an interest and still have that pride in the town.'

Councillor Barlow said the carnival's role in helping to kick-off July's Black Country Festival has helped keep it 'fresh'.

He said: 'It has expanded in the past couple of years as part of the Black Country Festival. That has kept it fresh and alive.'

'I'd also like to thank the volunteers who have worked so hard to get the event on.'

The dead of the Somme remembered at services

THE Black Country fell silent on Friday as the Battle of the Somme was remembered 100 years on.

Whistles were blown to mark the beginning of silence at solemn services across the region to commemorate the start of the battle, which was the bloodiest in British military history.

By the end of the first day nearly 20,000 had died on the battlefield in northern France. Within four months more than a million soldiers from both sides had been killed or injured in the trench warfare.

Events began early to mark the exact time a century ago when whistles were blown on the British front line at 7.30am to send troops over the top and into battle. Services were being held at Cenotaphs and churches across the region as people came out to pay their respects to the thousands of men, including many in their teens, who died.

Whistles were blown at Powke Lane Cemetery in Blackheath as members of the public joined representatives from the Royal British Legion branch.

Wreaths were laid as the war dead were remembered at Victoria Park in Tipton. People gathered at Holy Trinity Church in Wordsley for a remembrance service, starting a 7.30am.

A large commemorative service took place at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, which included a live link to the international Service of Remembrance at the Thiepval Monument in France, attended by the Her Majesty the Queen.

Tech institute call is backed by MP

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has called on Government to support the creation of a Dudley Institute of Technology.

The Government is establishing Institutes of Technology across the country to improve engineering, manufacturing and technology skills.

Dudley College has bid to host the Black Country's institute at its town centre campus, where it is building the £11 million Dudley Advance II centre.

Labour MP Mr Austin, who has worked with the college and manufacturers to support the new centre, said: 'One of the best ways of bringing new industries and new jobs to replace the ones we've lost in the West Midlands is to get behind these exciting plans for an Institute of Technology.'

Snow leopard cub has died at the zoo

A SNOW leopard cub has died at Dudley Zoo just weeks after his mother.

Zoo bosses confirmed that the four-week-old hand-reared Milo died on Monday after being taken ill overnight. Seven-year-old Nanga died after giving birth to Milo.

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Open hours at libraries slashed by the council

OPENING hours are being slashed at libraries across the Dudley borough in a cost-cutting move by the council.

Libraries will all see hours shaved off their days from August.

Libraries in Halesowen, Netherton and Brierley Hill will no longer be open on Sundays.

Both Dudley and Stourbridge Libraries will lose 11 hours a week. Sedgley's branch will be hit particularly hard, losing 17 hours and closing on Sundays.

The moves have been announced by Dudley Council and are due to come into force from August 1.

The cash-strapped authority has been desperate to cut costs at its libraries amid falling use. Council chiefs said decisions on each library had been made based on their usage.

Many of the biggest libraries currently stay open until 7pm during the week but bosses said that was no longer possible. Some will now close two to three hours earlier than that.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "The decision to reduce our opening times reflects a need to reduce budgets across the council in a time of huge cuts to local government funding."

"The good news is that no libraries are closing. Instead we have reduced the opening hours but only after listening to feedback from customers and looking closely at usage data which highlighted when people were actually using the libraries."

Strike disruption affects thousands

THOUSANDS of families were disrupted when schools closed due to national strike action taken by the country's largest teachers' union.

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) held its first nationwide strike since 2014, closing or partially closing more than 100 Black Country and Staffordshire schools on Tuesday.

Education secretary Nicky Morgan accused the NUT of 'playing politics with children's futures'. NUT acting general secretary Kevin Courtney retorted that problems facing education were 'too great to be ignored' and many parents shared their concerns

In Dudley 20 schools were partly shut and 11 completely closed, while in Sandwell seven were partly closed and eight shut.

Store's building is up for auction

POUNDLAND'S premises on Dudley High Street are up for auction, with no confirmation yet whether the store will be affected. The building is up for auction in London on July 11 with a guide price of nearly £2 million.

George Clarke

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Police seize another major cannabis haul



Cannabis in the Halesowen house

A HAUL of cannabis plants worth more than £400,000 has been made by police in a raid on a house in Halesowen.

Officers discovered the drug growing set up in Springfield Road, Halesowen, last week.

West Midlands Police were carrying out inquiries when they found six rooms in the property were being used to cultivate cannabis.

A total of 836 plants, worth £418,000, were found in the building.

West Midlands Police Cannabis Disposal Team tweeted: "The elec-

tricity had been abstracted illegally which required extensive work to make the house safe"

Police in the Black Country are raiding a cannabis farm an average of every three days – according to figures which show £9 million worth of drugs were seized in a year. Compared with last year, the number of factories discovered has shot up from 88 to 129.

West Midlands Police discovered £8,883,900 worth of cannabis in the region from April 2015 to April 2016. This was a decrease of more than £1m from the previous year.

Despite a drop in the value of cannabis found, the number of cannabis farms discovered has risen. In 2014/15 88 of the illegal set ups were discovered by police in the Black Country, in 2015/16 there were 129 found. These figures reveal cannabis farms now tend to be smaller but more common.

Police say cannabis farms 'are very dangerous places', often with bypassed and overloaded electrical circuits run close to water-filled pipes. The plants can also cause floorboards to rot, which presents the dangers of collapse.

Caretaker found guilty over tunnels drug farm

A CARETAKER has been found guilty of allowing a £650,000 cannabis factory to operate in the former nuclear bunker, Drakelow Tunnels, near Kinver.

After a jury returned a majority verdict finding of his guilt, Wayne Robinson, of Marlpool Lane, Kidderminster, was told by the judge to expect a prison sentence.

Police who raided the Second World War former aircraft factory, under Kingsford Country Park, in November, 2013 discovered 564 mature cannabis plants in a growing room. A further 321 immature plants were found in two other rooms.

The drugs were said to have a total street value of about £650,000.

Around 30 officers, including dog handlers, took part in the raid. They also found hydroponic growing equipment including heating, lighting and ventilation fans used in cultivating the drug.

Denied

Robinson, who was caretaker of the site owned by his brother, and also had his own logging business nearby, denied any knowledge of the cannabis farm.

He claimed he had rented that part of the tunnels to two men for the storage of car parts. He only knew them as 'Thomas and Fabian', and they paid him £200 a month in rent.

He also claimed that had he known about the cannabis farm he would not have allowed various events to have taken place in the tunnels. This included hundreds of visitors given unlimited access to the tunnels for events which included Evil Rising in July 2013 when more than 300 people were chased by30 actors dressed as monsters.

Robinson was granted bail after the jury found him guilty of permitting premises to be used for producing cannabis.

Judge Abbas Mithani QC told him: "It is more than likely there will be a custodial sentence."

"This is an extremely serious offence, to allow premises to be used for the production of very dangerous drugs which are intended to be sold to members of the public.

Robinson is due to be sentenced later in July when he will also be sentenced for possession of a shotgun and ammunition without the valid certificates, which he pleaded guilty to at a previous hearing.

Growing Oxyburn buys site next door



Rob Taylor, of Lloyds Bank, Rhiddian Billingham, of Oxyburn, and Andy Moss, director of manufacturing

A HALESOWEN manufacturer of vehicle recovery equipment has purchased an additional premises and new machinery to aid growth, with a £125,000 funding package from Lloyds Bank.

Founded over 14 years ago, Oxyburn produces vehicle recovery equipment including HGV under-lifts and customised curtain sided units.

The business approached Lloyds Bank Commercial Bank-

ing to support the purchase of 980 sq ft premises next door to its existing site on Shelah Road, which is now under conversion into an accident repair centre for vehicle body repairs and re-spraying.

It also received help from Lloyds Bank's Commercial Finance team to fund the purchase of a 160 tonne 5 axis CNC hydraulic press, which is used in forming of sheet metal for the manufacture of vehicle body platforms. The machine

has enabled the business to increase its output by a fifth.

Oxyburn Limited plans to continue to invest in equipment to grow its capacity as it looks to increase its turnover by 35 per cent in the next three years.

Rhiddian Billingham, Oxyburn business manager, said: "It has been a long-term strategy to add an accident repair arm to the business so we can provide a 'one-stop-shop' service to our customers."

NEWS IN BRIEF

It's a hoe-down in Haden Hill Park

FANS of country and western music have been invited to don their cowboy boots and head over to Haden Hill Park for a hoe-down.

Staff at Haden Hill Park and House, in Barrs Road, are organising the free Haden Hoe Down on Sunday from noon until 4pm.

Children's entertainment and a performance by New Age Creativity Dance Troupe are also lined up for an afternoon of fun. The room at Haden Hill House will be open for light refreshments, courtesy of the Friends of Haden Hill Estate.

Interiors shop creates six jobs

A NEW home interiors shop is creating six jobs in Halesowen when it opens this week.

Ponden Home will be opening its latest branch on Peckingham Street today (Thursday).

To celebrate the opening at 9am the first 20 customers will get a special goody bag that comprises a fragrance reed diffuser, pair of pillows, candle and money-off voucher.

Kevin Nock, area manager for the new Ponden Home shop, said: "We can't wait to open the doors of our new store."

£2.4m earmarked to help the carers

DUDLEY Council has earmarked £2.4 million to revamp its services to help vulnerable people, including carers.

It has been working with the Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners as part of a major overhaul of its services to improve support for people to live more independently.

It will see the introduction of a Carers' One Stop Shop. The plan also includes working closely with the Carers Alliance. The changes are to be in place by March next year.

Lloyds cuts means bank branch is set to close

THE Lloyds bank branch in Netherton is closing down. The branch in Halesowen Road is closing in October as part of a series of closures by the banking group

It has made the decision to close the Netherton branch because it already has another branch 1.3 miles away in High Street, Dudley.

The Netherton branch was identified for closure because it has fewer customers. It will not result in any compulsory job losses.

Chainmakers' talk

HISTORIAN and author Margaret Bradley is marking Black Country Day on Thursday, July 14, with a free talk on the Cradley Women Chainmakers' Strike of 1910.

The illustrated talk will be held at Overend Methodist Mission in Banners Lane, Cradley, at 7.30pm.

George Clarke

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

A FORMER colleague who lives in France declares in a column that Britain is now "more isolated than ever." I can only refer her to that classic (and probably apocryphal) newspaper billboard: "Fog in the Channel – Continent isolated."

I WOULD understand it if my wife sent me an email expressing reservations about Boris Johnson, like the one columnist Sarah Vine sent to her husband, the Tony MP, Brexit campaigner and now leadership contender Michael Gove. I would sympathise if my wife pressed the wrong button and the email ended up in the public domain; these things happen. What any spouse would find hard to forgive is Vine's shrill use of capital letters in her email which reads: "One simple message: you MUST have SPECIFIC ASSURANCES from Boris OTHERWISE you cannot guarantee your support." Does Mr Gove enjoy being addressed like a particularly dim five-year-old?



YOU know how it is when you don't think you've heard the whole story? Bank of England Governor Mark Carney says the bank is ready to provide £250, 000 million of additional funds to support financial markets. So where did he suddenly find that? Down the back of the sofa?

IN these uncertain post-referendum days, do you not feel the sand shifting beneath your feet? Like many Leavers, I watched the results coming in with mounting delight, followed by that "what have we done?" moment, followed in turn by growing pride and optimism. We are an amazing nation. We can do great things. But now there's a growing suspicion that Brexit is simply not going to happen. As I wrote on June 13, not entirely tongue-in-cheek: "Let me say it once again. If we vote in, we stay in the EU. If we vote Out, we stay in the EU. Simple as that." Time will tell.

A READER describes seeing a bloke using the urinal while eating a bacon sandwich. Too much information, thanks. Mind you, it does disprove that old belief about men being unable to multi-task.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

MP calls for murder case to be re-opened

GAVIN Williamson, MP for South Staffordshire, has joined Dudley North MP Ian Austin in calling for the reopening of the Carl Bridgewater case.

It comes after a TV documentary cast doubt on the alibi of the initial suspect, Bert Spencer.

Mr Spencer has called the Channel 4 programme – Interview With a Murderer – 'deceitful' and is calling for

By Jack Averty

the prosecution of his ex-wife Janet over claims she made in the documentary and criminologist Professor David Wilson, who interviewed him on TV.

Mr Williamson said he wants justice for the 'shocking crime' and has called on Home Secretary, the Solicitor General and the Chief Constable of Staffordshire to consider reopening the case.

The Kinver MP said: "It is terrible that the true killer of Carl Bridgewater has never been held to account.

Shocking

"I strongly support calls for the case to be looked at afresh in view of this possible new evidence and very much hope that we may finally be able to see whoever was responsible for this shocking crime brought to justice."

The murder of the 13-year-old paper boy at Yew Tree Farm near Kingswinford in 1978 shocked the nation. It is believed he was shot because he had disturbed a burglary.

As well as Mr Williamson, Dudley North MP Ian Austin has called on Home Secretary Theresa May to reopen the investigation into the murder of the Wordsley boy 38 years ago. Staffordshire Police have seen the 90-minute programme, Interview With a Murderer, broadcast on June 12.

The programme featured interviews with Bert Spencer, a suspect before the Bridgewater Four were wrongly convicted of the killing, and claims to cast doubts on his alibi. Mr Spencer maintains he 'had no involvement in this heinous crime' and any suggestion otherwise was 'hearsay and invention', describing the programme as 'deceitful'.

Mr Spencer, who now lives in Lincolnshire, served 15 years in prison for the 1979 shotgun killing of Hubert Wilkes at Holloway House Farm, Prestwood.

● **Quest for Truth – see page 6**

Gazza in court to deny charge



Paul Gascoigne leaves Dudley Magistrates Court

PAUL Gascoigne will stand trial in Dudley in September after appearing in court in the town over a racist comment he allegedly made at Wolverhampton Civic Hall.

The former England star pleaded not guilty to a charge of racially aggravated harassment during a hearing at Dudley Magistrates Court last week. Gazza, 49, of Poole, Dorset, arrived at court dressed in a dark suit and spoke to confirm his name, address and date of birth during the half hour hearing.

The Crown Prosecution Service decided to press charges following a complaint about the ex-footballer's conduct at his 'Evening with Gazza' show on November 30. The comment was allegedly made in reference to a security guard.

Mr Gascoigne arrived to a media scrum outside the court and stopped to sign autographs for fans. After pleading not guilty to the charge, he is due to face a one-day trial in Dudley at 9.30am on September 19 and is on unconditional bail.

District Judge Graham Wilkinson told him: "It is an imprisonable offence if you don't turn up."

Ambulance service is targeted by thieves

ITEMS worth more than £500 have been stolen from West Midlands ambulances in the past two years, figures have revealed.

Bags, helmets, mobile phones and even tax discs were among the items taken from ambulances while paramedics helped patients.

The highest value item stolen was an oxygen cylinder worth £300 taken from an ambulance in Birmingham.

Others stolen items include a sat nav system and tax disc worth a total of £100 and a helmet, trousers and a bag stolen in the Black Country worth around £110. A purse and phone were also stolen.

The figures thefts from ambulances in the Black Country and Birmingham between May 2014 to May 2016.

West Midlands Ambulance Service bosses labelled the thefts as 'unacceptable'.

Steve Elliker, the trust's regional head of security and safety, said: "It is completely unacceptable that equipment is stolen from our vehicles which are responding to help people in their hour of need."

"Items that are stolen obviously have to be replaced, at a cost to the trust, which is money that could be spent on employing additional paramedics or purchasing additional vehicles."

"Whilst thefts are relatively rare, even one case is one too many."

Win a share of £300 to spend in Ponden Home Halesowen

To celebrate the arrival of the new Ponden Home Interiors store in Halesowen Post Office 8 Peckingham Street, Halesowen B63 3AW were giving away a £50 voucher card to six lucky readers.

The winners can treat themselves to a selection of Ponden Home's extensive range of on- trend designs for every room of the home.

The new concept store features an exciting range of new summer collections featuring Ponden Home Interior's most sought after products including a full bedding range showcasing its ever popular Hotel Firm Pillows, Egyptian cotton sheet collection, Ponden Home quilts, contemporary & traditional designs in Quilt Covers, non-iron sheeting, mattress protectors, towels, ready-made curtains as well as an elegant selection of soft furnishings and home style gifts range.

"Our new concept store opens on the 7th July at 9am. Customers can expect to be greeted by our friendly team who will be on hand to show case exactly what our new Ponden Home Interiors store has to offer".

Store Address: Halesowen Post Office 8 Peckingham Street, Halesowen B63 3AW

To be in with a chance of winning a £50 voucher to spend in the store, simply answer the following question:
Where is the new Ponden Home store located?

Simply fill in this form and send to: FAO: Emma Scott, The Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Waverley Mills, Langholm, Dumfriesshire. DG130EB

Answer.....

Name.....

Address

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

Email.....

I have read the rules and agree to abide by them. Signed

Terms and conditions: Vouchers to the value of £50 may be exchanged for goods at Ponden Home Halesowen. Vouchers can be exchanged for goods of a higher price than their face value on payment of the difference. They can also be exchanged for goods of a lesser price than face value, where change for every full pound will be supplied in vouchers and pence will be supplied in coinage. Vouchers cannot be exchanged for cash. Six winners will be able to collect a £50 voucher from Ponden Home Halesowen by presenting one piece of ID. Closing date for entries is July 24th 2016

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Firefighters tackle timber business blaze

TWENTY firefighters attended a major fire in Brierley Hill that saw part of a timber merchants business go up in smoke.

Crews were called to the blaze at around 3.15pm on Saturday after passers-by spotted smoke coming from Woodstock Timber Supplies Ltd, on Old Bush Street.

Plumes of smoke were spotted by shoppers at the nearby Merry Hill shopping centre.

West Midlands Fire service deployed three appliances following the emergency calls, and asked for a further appliance to be deployed after they arrived at the scene.

Two hose reels were used to put out the blaze, which crews were still tackling an hour later. Breathing apparatus were also used by firefighters as they tackled the fire.

Owner of Woodstock Timber Supplies, Dave Oakley, of Smestow, has been in business at the site for 27 years.

He said: "We've never had anything like this happen. I don't know how much stock we've lost, but I'm just grateful to the guys here (firefighters) for coming out so quickly. The fire only affected a very small part of the yard with only slight damage to one of the buildings. We're still open for business as normal, so customers will still get their orders"

Dream of flowers as club host special event

HALESOWEN Flower Club will host a demonstration night on Thursday, July 14.

Sharon Badger will be giving a talk titled 'In a Dream World' at the Shennstone Theatre, above Halesowen Library.

The event will start at 7.30pm. Admission is £5.

Judges say dangerous driver must be kept off the roads

Creative students in arts showcase



Creative arts students at Halesowen College have showcased their work in a series of events at the college. STUDENTS at Halesowen College have put the finishing touches to their art, graphics, fashion and media projects for their annual summer show.

The college has opened its doors for guests to see the students' work on display.

Fashion shows provided fashion and

textile students a showcase to promote their catwalk designs and there was theatrical make-up show.

Talented

Sarah Dobson, faculty director for creative arts at the college, said: "We have a fantastic display of work from

our very talented students from a range of creative subjects. Everyone has worked so hard on their projects and deserves this recognition."

She added: "It was great to see students with their families and friends showcasing their work and recognising their achievements."

A BANNED driver who killed a soldier in Oldbury after speeding through a red light should be kept off the roads for 'many years', top judges have said.

Kasim Mohammed, aged 27, of Bearwood Road, Smethwick, slammed into Adam Hancox's Ford Ka on the Wolverhampton Road, in November 2014. He admitted causing death by dangerous driving at Wolverhampton Crown Court and was jailed for 10 years and banned for 12 years last year.

Last week Mohammed claimed the ban was too long at the Court of Appeal in London and should be reduced to seven years. But Lord Justice Gross rejected the plea - citing Mohammed's 'horrific' driving - but cut the disqualification by one year to take account of time Mohammed served in prison before he was sentenced.

He said Mohammed had a long record of driving offences and had been banned on multiple occasions. The crash which killed 26-year-old Mr Hancox, of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, was the latest in that long list of convictions.

Erratically

Mohammed had been driving erratically and went through the red light at 60mph in an area with a 40mph limit.

"The driving which caused the death involved a total disregard for the danger it posed to others," said the appeal judge. "His driving was horrific." Mohammed's lawyers had argued it was wrong to ban him until he is 39, when he will be out of prison and on licence by the age of 31. It could make it more difficult for him to rehabilitate, it was argued.

But Lord Justice Gross, sitting with Mr Justice William Davis and Judge Gregory Dickinson QC, said the public needed protection from his driving.

Clash over fortnightly bin rounds

COUNCILLORS clashed over controversial proposals to collect rubbish bins in Dudley once a fortnight.

The authority last month revealed plans to collect rubbish bins every two weeks and charge residents £30 a year for green waste collections as part of a swathe of new cost-cutting measures.

But amid furious responses members confirmed a rethink on the proposals, which will be scrutinised by an all-party working group.

Conservatives and UKIP councillors argued against the plans during a heated cabinet meeting with Tory Councillor Karen Shakespeare saying she was 'absolutely outraged by this proposal'. She added: "The Labour administration know they won't get this supported by the Conservatives or UKIP to pass it at any stage."

Council leader Pete Lowe said the authority had to balance its books and make tough choices.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



Gunning for names linked to dark past

THIS month we mark Black Country Day, a time to celebrate the countless industries which made this area the workshop of the world. From the Newcomen steam engine at Dudley, the glittering glassware of Wordsley and Kingswinford, the red, fiery furnaces of Bilston, Wednesbury, and Brierley Hill – the Black Country led the world.

Unless, it seems, you are the headmistress of a school at the heart of one of our historic manufacturing centres.

For centuries there has been an area around the outskirts of West Bromwich known as Guns Village. Its precise origins are uncertain, but around the 18th and 19th centuries it played a major role in Britain's munitions industry.

Ok, so some of the industrialists of the day weren't too fussy about where their weapons ended up – in many cases, the Confederate side of the American Civil War. Nevertheless, Guns Village played an important role in making West Bromwich the place it is today.

Dawn Cooper, the headmistress of Guns Village Primary School, believes the name has connotations with gun crime, and is inviting people to come up with a nice new touchy-feely name for the school. I suppose we should be grateful she didn't use the word 'inclusive', which usually accompanies such madcap proposals. But if you apply the same logic elsewhere, should Arsenal football club be renamed?

Slave

Then there's Fighting Cocks in Wolverhampton, which of course is associated with blood-sports, not to mention the Bull Rings in Birmingham and Sedgley.

And what about Penny Lane, immortalised by The Beatles? The road, near John Lennon's childhood home, was named after John Penny, a leading figure in Liverpool's slave trade. I suppose Paul McCartney's lyrics could be rewritten, but somehow "In the road at the junction near the bus terminal at Smithdown Place there is a barber showing photographs" doesn't really work, does it? Maybe the song should be banned altogether. Suits me, I can't stand The Beatles.

Of course, it's easy to poke fun, which is why I do it. But there is a serious side to all this. History is littered with bloody and unpalatable stories, from the rise and fall of the Roman Empire to the Second World War. But this modern, 'progressive' idea that everything unpleasant or offensive should be airbrushed from our past is disturbing in an age where university students demand 'safe spaces' lest they be subjected to opinions they dislike.

Guns Village will always be Guns Village, whatever the school thinks. Perhaps if schools spent more time teaching youngsters about local history rather than shielding them from anything unpleasant or violent, they would have more of a sense of identity and civic pride.



Bert Spencer insists he had no role in Carl's death



Murdered – 13-year-old paperboy Carl Bridgewater was shot



True crime writer Simon Golding spent two years on the book

Quest for truth over the murder of Carl

True crime writer Simon Golding tells TOBY NEAL how he shed new light on a notorious child murder

AN author who says he has uncovered evidence which sheds new light on the unsolved murder of paperboy Carl Bridgewater.

True crime writer Simon Golding, from Bridgnorth, has detailed his findings in a book which has taken nearly two years to write. He was also involved in a recent Channel 4 television documentary in which Bert Spencer – a convicted murderer who has lived under a cloud of suspicion that he killed 13-year-old Carl – was interviewed by a top criminologist. Spencer vociferously denied any involvement in the 1978 killing, for which four men – who became known as the Bridgewater Four were convicted – but subsequently cleared by the Court of Appeal in 1997.

Carl is thought to have disturbed burglars while delivering a paper to Yew Tree Farm at Prestwood, in countryside near Stourbridge, and was shot dead at point blank range.

Golding's book is called Scapegoat for Murder: The Truth About the Killing of Carl Bridgewater and was originally due to be launched last September.

But Simon was approached by the television team and worked closely with them, and agreed to delay publication until after the documentary was broadcast last month.

It takes its "scapegoat" title from a phrase often used by Spencer.

Simon, who used to live near the scene of the killing, said: "It is a misconception that I am in any way in support of Bert Spencer.

"My only loyalty was to the truth and to try to seek justice for the violent and senseless murder of a 13-year-old boy. This story is so very tragic and close to my heart. I lived in Stourton and could see Yew Tree Farm, where the murder took place, from my attic bedroom at age 16.

"I watched the police combing the area for



The scene of the crime that shocked the nation in 1978 – Yew Tree Farm, near Stourbridge

clues. I knew a few of the witnesses, together with the doctor who first found Carl's dead body.

Personal

"Carl's father worked for my late father and I had worked next to Brian Bridgewater before I became a journalist, writer and producer in 1994, so it was somewhat personal to me."

The book, he says, was written neither to exonerate nor incriminate Spencer.

"It is up to the reader to make their minds up," he said.

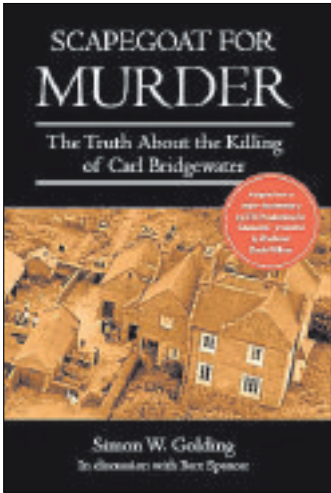
The author says that when Spencer was in prison for the murder of Hubert Wilkes, he had written a series of notes and essays in the form of a rough manuscript, which were passed on. The documents were a crude rant

at his accusers, including campaigning journalist Paul Foot. Although little was usable, Simon conducted his own investigation and came up with his own conclusions.

"I started my journey with contact from Bert Spencer, due to an unrelated incident as his late brother, Don, shared a mutual friend – I was trying to track this friend down as it was coming up to my 50th birthday.

"Of course, I knew all about Spencer being a major suspect in the murder of the paperboy. This was when the Bridgewater Four campaign was starting up. I built up an odd friendship with Spencer and he found out I was a writer.

"In the early days I was a campaigner for the Bridgewater Four. Then, after my early dealings with Spencer, I got more involved.



Scapegoat for Murder by Simon Golding

"I started writing the book and tried to be objective and I went through the process letting Bert have his right of reply, but also checking up on certain events where information was available.

"I had obviously interviewed Spencer face-to-face many times and I think it was fair to say he would paint himself in the best possible light. All my conclusions in the book challenge some of the information shared with me by Spencer."

Simon added: "On many TV and other media interviews Spencer talks about 'his' book, which is totally incorrect – I have full rights and Spencer has not actually read my book!"

He said the book was selling well and was in the Amazon bestseller list for true crime.

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No coherent plan for museum's move

I'VE yet to identify a coherent plan by Dudley Council regarding the closure of Dudley Museum and transfer of its permanent collection/exhibitions programme to Dudley Archives.

The Archives building in Tipton Road is beautiful, yet it was designed to house local and civic records – it seems it's now being asked to transform into a display facility as well as storing artefacts.

There is only one room at Archives that is remotely suitable for exhibitions, and that's the foyer that includes a small alcove area. If that is to be used

for a regular exhibitions programme, it will remove the most attractive feature of the building, used by visitors and conference delegates alike as a break-out area.

One by one, all other rooms at Archives have been occupied by various council departments and one commercial organisation. Therefore the only way to provide exhibition space is to build a museum extension. It would make sense to provide an all-round heritage amenity on one site but nonsense if the purpose of the whole exercise is to save money.

The element that really lets the building down is the unmade car park – a rough area full of potholes. Whatever happens, this area must be improved because it currently presents an appalling impression to visitors.

There is no indication either of what may happen to the staff of both buildings. Archives skills and museum skills aren't the same. Will Archives staff have to retrain so they can double up as museum staff and be expected to cope with all the additional work?

M JONES
Volunteer at Dudley Archives

Now we must work together

REGARDLESS of which side we voted for, it is now time to put the differences aside and to make Britain better by working together.

For too long immigrants have been used as scapegoats. Truth is we British have in some ways neglected our country, letting it and its reputation decline.

This is our time to focus on Britain, our home. We must work together to ensure our youngsters are well educated, to work with communities and police to cut crime, to tackle anti-social behaviour and make our neighbourhoods safe and friendly, work with businesses to help sustain employment and growth.

It is time to put Britain back on the map as a nation of honest and hard working people. It is down to us to make a better future. So, help Britain thrive again and be respected as it once was. Otherwise, it will be too late to repair.

F ZARA
Brierley Hill

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chron@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

'Let it rip' riders are not without blame

I HAVE seen articles pleading with motorists to 'be more aware of motorcyclists', attributed to Michael Rutter.

One of the major factors of motorcyclists being involved in accidents is speed. A couple of years ago, my brother-in-law was in Sandwell Hospital and the guy in the next bed was an elderly motorcyclist, who said: "We buy the newest and best bikes when they come on the market, and just let it rip." I once knew a guy who used to brag that he rode along the 'Rabbit Run' at 140 mph.

And what about clothing? Many riders wear black. Can they be seen clearly? And what about lights? They give others chance to see bikes but how many do not bother to have them on.

The most important item is the Highway Code and speed limits. How often do motorcyclists ignore both of these? If they are involved in an accident, the riders are always said by their relatives to be 'careful riders'.

My wife and I frequent the Wolverley area. Both the A449 main road, and the road in and out of Wolverley village, are used by motorcyclists to 'let rip'.

All road users should take care.

P COLE
Kingswinford

The Brexit blunder is not binding

NOW the consequences of an exit from the EU are becoming more apparent. I suspect some may be wondering if they have done the right thing.

I believe a referendum is fine as a barometer of public opinion but it should never be used in isolation to determine Government policy.

We democratically elect our MPs to make such decisions on our behalf. To delegate such major decisions to the people is an act of gross negligence and a sure sign of a weak and divided Government. Cameron has put the interests of his party before the interests of the country.

We would never trust the future of our country to the media and flamboyant political extremists, but a referendum leaves the electorate at the mercy of such people. A referendum is not legally binding. There is still time to get out of this mess, if the Government has the courage to act.

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Black Country Run is best yet



Pounding the streets of Halesowen at the weekend

MORE than 1,000 runners were out pounding the streets in force at the weekend as they took to the road to complete the Black Country Run.

The run, which last year raised more than £27,000 for charities, started at 9am for the 10k runners, with the 5K family fun version of the run commencing at 11.30am. A total of 72 charities were selected by the organisers for runners to raise money for, although they could also choose other charities.

Some of the charities supported by the run were: Birmingham Children's Hospital, County Air Am-

The Black Country Run attracted 1,200 and raised £27,000, David Cosgrove reports

bulance, Barnardo's, Acorns Children's Hospice, Multiple Sclerosis Society and British Heart Foundation. Local charities were also supported, including: the Beacon Centre for the Blind, Sandwell Parents for Disabled Children, Langley Youth Theatre and Halesowen Cycling and Athletics Club.

Alan Bowler, former president of the Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club, who organised the event said: "It was a truly fantastic day. It was wonderful to see so

many people out in the community enjoying themselves.

"I started the event under the name of the Halesowen fun run in 2012 when we had around 400 participants. It's grown year on year to have 1,000 in 2015. This year we had 1,200 runners. Over the years we've raised more than £77,000 for different charities and the community has supported us every step of the way. Each year it goes from strength to strength. People from across the UK came to compete."



Family fun - Jake, Adam and Mia Goren



Lots of energy - Julia Mitchelmore and Abigail Braithwaite



The race begins - runners set off on the 10 kilometre Black Country Run



From left, participants Guy Birkett, Neil Lloyd, John Moss and Laura Jones

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Chain reaction as town festival is marching on

HUNDREDS of people gathered in Cradley Heath to mark a landmark event in the history of equal rights.

The annual Chainmakers' Festival took over High Street in the town on Saturday.

It commemorated the 1910 Women Chainmakers' Strike led by Mary Macarthur and the women of Cradley Heath. A mural of the town's significant buildings and personalities, painted by local artists Maren Lilley, was also unveiled on the bypass at the Fox Oak Street Business Units as part of the event.

Market stalls, fairground rides, live music, dance and speeches took place.

Dudley Council's cabinet member for environmental services, Councillor Hilary Bills, said the event had been a fantastic celebration of what the strike achieved more than 100 years ago.

She said: "I've been involved with the festival since 2004 and it's always good to re-enact the march the women did back in 1910."

We've been in Cradley High for the past two years after having been in the Black Country Living Museum from 2006 to 2010.

Celebrate

"We've found our proper home now - the High Street is Cradley Heath where Mary Macarthur and the women actually made their stand."

"It's important to celebrate. It is growing every year and especially since we took it back to Cradley Heath. I bumped into quite a few people who said 'my grandmother or great-grandmother was a chainmaker'."

The strike was pivotal in labour history and a significant step in the development of a universal minimum wage.

During a visit to Empire Theatre in Cradley Heath, union leader Macarthur saw poverty and was shocked by the infant mortality rate.

After she persuaded chainmaker



As part of the festival artist Maren Lilley, unveils her mural on Fox Oak Street



The stalls at the Cradley Heath event bosses to set a minimum wage, she was left angry when they found a loophole that meant that the wage increase could be held back by nine months.

This allowed them to stockpile chain and then lay off workers before the increase. In response, Macarthur organised strikes at chainmakers, the first



Tony Barnsley with book Martha's Story being in Graingers Lane. The strike lasted 10 weeks until employers finally agreed to meet their demands.

Also at the event was author Tony Barnsley. His book Martha's Story is based on the diary of an 11-year-old girl who made chain with her family in the early 20th century.

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£11.7m training site for skills in pipeline

PLANS for an £11.7 million manufacturing training centre in Tipton have been formally submitted.

The skills centre is proposed to be built at the former Thomas Dudley site off Tipton Road, Tividale, in collaboration with the University of Wolverhampton.

If built the facility will offer specialist training in toolmaking, foundry skills, pattern making and metal forming and will become the latest training centre to launch in Dudley following several new Dudley College campuses in recent years.

Artist's impressions show a modern-looking building, with the main workshop decked out in the colours of the Black Country flag. The centre is due to open in 2017 and it is hoped it will become the new institute of technology in the Black Country.

The scheme received £7.6 million of crucial funding was allocated by The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) through its Growth Deal. It is now due to go before Sandwell Council's planning committee in the next few weeks.

Ninder Johal, an LEP board member, said: "It's great to see the plans have gone in. As we all know the Black Country has a long tradition of manufacturing excellence and we have seen a recent renaissance in the area."

Bosses behind the scheme were keen to include the Black Country flag colours of black, red and white which have become so popular and identifiable with the region in recent years.

A design statement states: "The proposed colour scheme for the workshop draws inspiration from the Black Country flag. We believe this reference will engender a sense of pride for the local community and make this an iconic building with an already proud industrial landscape."



The proposed manufacturing training centre, in Black Country flag colours

Travolta trip tickets on sale

FANS of Hollywood megastar John Travolta are being offered the chance to see him in the flesh in Birmingham – with top meet-and-greet packages costing as much as £999.

The star of Grease and Pulp Fiction will be taking part in a Q&A at the ICC on Saturday, September 24.

Standard tickets for the black tie event are available for £45 but additional extras will set back fans a lot more. A photo with the actor will cost an extra £345. The platinum package -

which includes a photo and the chance to meet Travolta costs £999.

Travolta will sit down with television presenter Jenni Falconer to talk about his life and career. He recently appeared in the BBC hit drama The People v OJ Simpson: American Crime Drama. The event is being organised by the Olexy Group, the same firm which brought Arnold Schwarzenegger to Birmingham earlier this year.

Tickets are available from olexy-group.com

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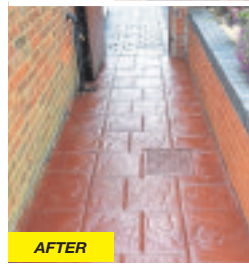
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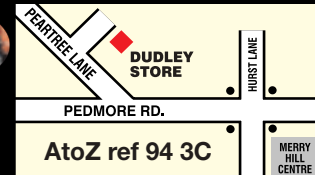
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Passengers on shuttle increasing

FOR the sixth successive year the Stourbridge Shuttle has broken its records for passenger numbers.

In total, more than 3.5 million passengers have used the service since it started, using two railcars produced in Cradley Heath by Parry People Movers.

In the year-to-end May 2016, approximately 600,000 journeys were made on the Stourbridge branch line, compared to the 595,000 trips made in the year-to-end May 2015.

The latest figures represent an increase of 27 per cent over the first full year of operation in 2011.

Pre Metro Operations run the service, which provides a rail link between Junction and Town stations in Stourbridge, in partnership with London Midland. Journey times between the two stations are around three minutes.

Bridge crash caused delays

A CRASH between a car and a van caused delays in Cradley Heath on Friday.

The accident took place on the canal bridge between Chapel Street and Abingdon Road, just before 3pm.

No-one was injured during the two-vehicle collision, but a backlog of traffic was caused on Saltwells Road, affecting those driving towards Cradley Heath and Netherton. One ambulance attended the incident.

FOCUS ON CRADLEY & CRADLEY HEATH

Sadness as market finally shuts down after 40 years

CRADLEY Heath market has closed down after more than 40 years.

It comes after the indoor market was left with just one stallholder after traders moved into nearby shops. Oyster Properties say they are in talks with Asda and Lidl over the future of the site.

Concerns were raised about falling footfall at the 40-stall capacity market hall, despite a five-figure investment by the property group.

A spokesman for Oyster said: "The last year and a half we have been trying to revive the market and get it back to where it should be but we either did not have the right people coming in or they were just not coming at all. Unfortunately it has not survived but we are keen to look to the future and get someone in the space."

Around six stalls have now moved into shop units attached to the market hall, also owned by Oyster, including former pet food, flowers and giftware stalls.

The spokesman continued: "Since it has been empty we have spoken to a few large retail companies who could bring more footfall into Cradley by taking over the old space. These include names such as Home Bargains, Asda and Lidl."

"What is extremely positive is the fact that it has created an entrepreneur-

By Clare Butler

ship in the town as the adjoining shop units that some holders have moved into are doing very well. We want to see the whole of Cradley regenerated in a similar way."

Gary Link, who had previously worked on the fish counter in the market, said: "It was expected that it was going to happen. Nevertheless, I was still shocked as it used to be thriving and it was really sad to see it deteriorate."

However, nearby The Central Market on High Street, known locally as the 'little market', is still open. Its manager Oliver Watchorn said: "We don't want our customers to think we are closed. We are very much open for business, offering a variety of stores from fresh produce to our own cafe. Our market is proud to serve the Cradley Heath community."

Bus station safety award is just the ticket



Sgt Dave Keasey, Cllr John McNicholas, assistant station manager Steve Lawrence, Cllr Richard Worrall and Mike Gardner

CRADLEY Heath bus station has been handed a national award after being praised for measures which deter crime and anti-social behaviour.

The facility was awarded safer bus station status after assessments by West Midlands Police and the British Parking Association. The checks include management and maintenance of the station ensuring there are appropriate levels of surveillance, lighting, signage and cleanliness.

Bosses said these criteria are known to reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime, creating a safer environment for passengers.

Safer travel manager Mark Babington said: "This accreditation is a national first and demonstrates that we have in place measures which help to deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour."

The station is owned and run by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM),

the transport arm of the newly-formed West Midlands Combined Authority. It was prepared for the assessment by the Safer Travel Partnership, which consists of TfWM, West Midlands Police, British Transport Police and transport operators.

Councillor John McNicholas, outgoing chairman of the transport delivery committee, said: "This success is down to the hard work of station staff and members of the safer travel team."

Lawyers hit the heights for charity

A TEAM from law firm George Green, which has offices in Cradley Heath, has completed the Three Peaks Challenge raising money for the law firm's charity of the year Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA).

Five staff members took on the challenge of trekking up Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon last month. After climbing 2,926 metres and walking over 22 miles, the team completed the challenge in 29-and-a-half hours, raising £1,900.

The team was made up of Lauren Dale, Greg Farley, Emma Fawkes-Underwood, Jane Williams and Paul Woodman. Lauren, a trainee solicitor at George Green, which also has offices in Wolverhampton, said: "This was a huge challenge for our team. We are extremely proud to have reached the summit of all three mountains."

Leisure trust's national first

SANDWELL Leisure Trust's health and safety record over the past decade at facilities including Cradley Heath Leisure Centre, has earned a top award bestowed by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

By securing 10 consecutive Gold achievement awards from RoSPA, the Sandwell Leisure Trust is to be honoured with the coveted President's Award, the first leisure trust to achieve this distinction.

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AS SEEN ON TV

Albion goal hero Tony 'Bomber' Brown, also features on the artwork.



Dudley artist William Burgess with the murals which have now been installed at Sandwell Park Farm

Bosses call for swift action after Brexit

"If ever there were a time to ditch the straight-jacket of fiscal rules for investment in a better business infrastructure, this is it."

Solicitors forced to shut after 41 years

By Simon Penfold

Allegations

It is understood the allegations surround involvement with the EcoHouse Developments scheme to build social housing in Brazil, which collapsed in 2014 owing investors more than £20 million.

In a statement the firm added: "The partners at Sanders & Co are bitterly disappointed at this turn of events but unfortunately do not have the resources to continue any further litigation with its insurers therefore the closure is unavoidable."

Choir's £1k for centre

The funds raised will go to helping the centre which provides support to disabled children, young people and their families across the Dudley borough.



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Making a statement with vintage additions

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

By John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



SOMETIMES it's nice to buy an antique just because it's a talking point – and these are the kind of vintage items that look good displayed in a sitting room, dining room or hallway where all of your visitors will spot it!

I'm not talking suits of armour (although, of course, this is possible, albeit reproduction), I mean any kind of item that interests people.

This can be anything from a framed set of old cigarette cards to some Beatles memorabilia, from a pith helmet to a 1930s radio.

People often buy pieces at auction because they are simply talking points: a Victorian rocking horse, a very unusual piece of furniture, an architectural item that came from a unique property.

Even items such as an old-fashioned telephone, pieces of vintage glass, those lovely 1930s 'piano babies', all provide a focal point for conversation and can actually set the tone of a room.

And if you buy one unusual item, chances are you will buy more of the same – thereby creating a theme.

If you buy a vintage telephone for display on a desk in a home office, for example, it might be nice to add an old typewriter or even something more elaborate



such as a 1950s mini-switchboard. I've also seen a fabulous collection of old model cars gathered together on an office coffee table, they looked really good and each one had been bought for a specific reason, a replica of a 'first car', a 'dream car' or a movie favourite.

Rocking horses are often bought by adults to stand in various rooms around the home – and other children's toys are popular for bedrooms.

China dolls may look a bit spooky with their wide glass eyes but they often appear sitting prettily on a bedroom cupboard, as do vintage teddy bears and gollies.

These talking points can range from the sublime, such as a replica model of a Roman senator to the downright strange . . . I have seen a coffee table made from a glass case containing a small stuffed shark!

And for the more traditional coffee table, you could have on display some interesting vintage books, such as the first edition of a classic, even a signed copy of the same, or one that is of particular significance – a while ago we sold a copy of Charlotte Bronte's novel Villetta, attributed to her original pen name Currer Bell.

You don't have to spend a fortune, stick to a budget but make your home unique with a few vintage additions.

Perry and Phillips Auctioneers holds sales of antiques and collectables on the first Tuesday of each month. Valuation days, for sale items only, are held every Wednesday at the Mill Street saleroom, in Low Town, Bridgnorth, from 10am until 4pm.

Everyone can be a beach babe this summer



Janet models swimwear of the 60s

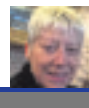
THIS week I went into a BHS store, it was incredibly sad, another of our high street shops closing, already the fixtures and fittings being removed and the clothing stock hanging on moveable rails, sale signs adorning every available space.

As I browsed the varied reduced price garments I came across a range of swimwear that really caught my eye. Bright marine blues and greens, stripes, zigzags and plains, highlighted with white and black contrast, items that mixed and matched beautifully.

Swimwear today is so practical, its styling moving back in time to our grandmother's era, less tiny triangle bikinis and more tankinis, full swimsuits and swimming skirts and shorts. These particular items were a lovely soft lycra, fully lined and with support in all the right areas. I would be covering my body from just below shoulder to my thigh and at very little cost, suddenly the prospect of a summer holiday by the pool seemed more inviting. . . . our men however are back to wearing the trendiest of Speedos, not always the best choice, but definitely the swimwear of now. Look on their site www.speedo.co.uk to

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



see more about the amazing technology held in a small pair of trunks.

In the early part of the 20th century costumes were made of wool, heavy, 'expanding' and uncomfortable when wet, bathing shoes completed the ensemble. The changing cabin would be dragged onto the beach so, once changed, the swimmer was not far from the water and therefore protected their dignity. Prior to the 1930s our swimwear would have been knitted at home, however professional swimmers found silk suits a lighter option and then when rayon was invented it was the beginning of fabric technology changing what we wore when indulging in the varied watersports and beach pastimes. The bikini was designed in 1946 by Louis Reard (named after Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific where atomic bomb testing had taken place)

In the 1950s swimming costumes were worn as part of the 'Beauty Contest' stages, from Butlins holidays to the high profile 'Miss World' on television, showing off the shapely figure of the contestant, no longer something we find fashionable. As a child, in the early 60s, I remember my friend wearing a swimming costume crocheted by her mother, I thankfully had a blue nylon shirred fabric number with frills on the edges.

Costumes with UV protection from the sun are now available to help protect us from those dangerous rays. We can buy compression items to aid in the recovery of our muscles after exercise and we can add full areas of support to improve our shape with excellent stretch and contouring. Quick drying and chlorine resistant is also standard in today's garments.

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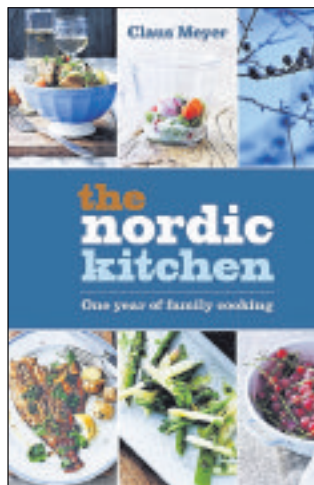


Claus Meyer is now living in New York



Fish cakes with tartare sauce is one of the recipes in the new book

No nonsense from top Nordic food champion



The book, priced £25, is available now

FRESH from an appearance on Saturday Kitchen, Claus Meyer is in a sea-blue three-piece suit and has spent the morning chopping up a raw inner-thigh of beef to make beetroot tartar with horse-radish.

The restaurateur, businessman and chef is what you'd call supremely Nordic – from his no-nonsense attitude, to his chiselled, Viking cheekbones.

That and the fact he spearheaded the Nordic cuisine food movement and co-founded Noma, widely considered the best restaurant in the world.

"It's difficult to compare anything with Noma," he muses, "but it wasn't my achievement alone, I had a very good chef and friend and partner with me down the road in Rene (Redzepi), and he grew a lot through the project. He was an unknown chef when we started, now he's the most known chef in the world."

Noma sent Meyer stratospheric in the world of food, while driving the New Nordic Cuisine movement, and developing a manifesto for it in 2004 saw him define and develop a whole new way of thinking about and working with food in Denmark, focusing on simplicity, seasonality and freshness.

By Ella Walker

"Not only did we launch the Nordic Cuisine," he says proudly, "we also launched the concept of any region having the potential – not only the right – but also the possibility, to suddenly capture the moment."

However, Meyer's personal ideas on food, and his recipes for home cooks, have only just become available in the UK.

When he first wrote The Nordic Kitchen, it was at a time where, he explains, having launched Noma and Nordic Cuisine, he "wanted to translate all the culinary ideas and bring them into a home cooking context".

Dressing

Meyer can seem severe, and the recipes spare, but, he says: "I consider my food, or any food, like a draft – people should not be afraid to change the recipes slightly, and they should definitely season it so it works for them. Seasoning food is very important, chopping up things and putting them in a salad bowl is so easy, but getting the dressing right? It's so important."

Roughly 10 months ago, the 52-year-old moved with his wife, three daughters and two dogs to New York, and although he's "not missing Denmark as much as I would have expected", his new project is perhaps

his most ambitious to date. The plan is to open a Nordic brasserie and food hall in Manhattan's Grand Central Terminal.

"It's one thing speaking about a project, inventing it, financing it and looking at all the details, but when it starts becoming an operation that runs all day long, all year long, it's a different animal," Meyer explains.

"So I'm really scared – but I'm also looking forward to get into it. I'm tired of planning and designing it, spending 20 million US dollars getting it up and running, I just want to see that animal."

"It's like training a racehorse; you're in the training field for years, and you want that horse to run."

As you'd imagine, he gets very few days off, but when he does, Meyer says: "I play tennis and do sport with my girls, I read a little bit, I try and discover New York. But besides cooking, running this show, being there for the family, being present, whether that means making an ice-cream with the ice-cream machine, going for a walk with the dogs in the park, watching a nice film – in between those very, very down-to-earth, basic family things, like taking a long breakfast together on a Sunday morning, there is not much time."

"Having brunch is not a passion, but you have to have that in your life somewhere."

Farce was funny, but not a laugh out loud

Swap!, Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE 'fun' started when I asked the programme seller in the foyer if she wanted to exchange (as it had Swap! emblazoned on it).

And then I was in danger of missing the ending. It said Act 2: 24 Hours Later, you see, so I was going to come back the next day.

Such gags are on a par with the ones in this farce, written and directed by Ian Ogilvy. Some were subtle, others shoehorned in, but, although funny in places wasn't laugh out loud.

It was set in Marbella where Brian and Susan Flowers and her brother Jeremy swapped homes with the householder. Bodies soon appeared and the trio got themselves into a host of tricky situations.

Nine bodies turned up among the cast of seven. But there was 'corpsing' from one of those that lived.

First Patric Kearns as Jeremy told Brian (David Callister) to "Shut up Bri-ony." Then he referred to the character Nick Nick as Knick-Knack.

Stafford-born Freya Copeland, ex of Emmerdale, can be forgiven for overacting at times, while Louisa Lytton, formerly of The Bill and EastEnders, appeared as homeowner Paul Dobson's ex-girlfriend Coral.

David Janson, best known as the Keeping Up Appearances postman, was Dobson and mobster Pedro. Davies Palmer and Alan Mehdi-zadeh also took on multi roles.

Mark Shipp



Super troupers – Emma Clifford, Sara Poyzer and Jacqueline Braun, in Mamma Mia!

Sunny stage set on Abba's dancing queens and kings

Mamma Mia! Birmingham Hippodrome

TO misquote Abba's Dancing Queen, the Mamma Mia! musical juggernaut rolled into town and it really did look like the cast were 'having the time of their lives'.

We were invited to throw away any preconceptions we may have had thanks to THAT movie, which featured some of the worst singing ever laid down on celluloid!

And with this colourful take on the story, a few tweaks here and there, a simple set which does not detract from the music, and a couple of extra Abba songs thrown in for good measure – it was a case of Meryl who?

Sara Poyzer steers the ship with ease as single mum Donna, who is coming to terms with the marriage of her young daughter on a Greek island, whilst running a hotel. Of course farce ensues when she keeps bumping into the three potential fathers of Sophie – played by English rose Lucy May Barker – after she sets up the quest to establish her paternal roots.

Things really take off when Donna's former 'backing singers' Rosie (Jacqueline Braun) and Tanya (Emma Clifford) burst onto the scene, effortless in their stagecraft and bringing every possible comic nuance to the fore.

Graeme Andrew

REVIEWS

The pair's vocals, particularly during Chiquitita blend beautifully and provide the foundations for many a standout moment.

But, and here is the cliché you've all been waiting for, the real star of the show is the music! Sorry.

One forgets how – and this is difficult for me to write – great some of the music from Msrs Andersson and Ulvaeus really is. The Name of the Game, is an absolute classic, Thank You For The Music is beautifully lilting.

One final mention must go to the amazingly energetic ensemble who seem to be running around the stage, doing acrobatics and hernia-inducing gyrations all night long. But no-one quite gets close to the Duracell-battery powered pocket-rocket Louis Stockill as Pepper, whose performance during Does Your Mother Know comes close to stealing the show.

Mamma Mia! runs until Saturday September 3, contact the box office 0844 338 5000, or log onto www.birminghamhippo.drome.com.

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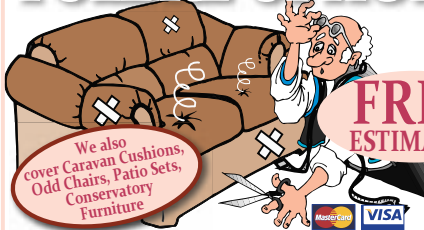
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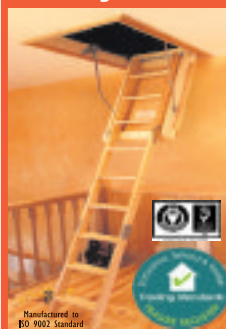
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Dog-friendly gardens with something for everyone

Can you happily share your garden with your dog? As designer Paul Hervey-Brookes prepares his Hampton Court Flower Show garden, A Dog's Life, he offers tips on how to create a garden that dogs and their owners can enjoy

AWARD-WINNING garden designer Paul Hervey-Brookes has three dogs – two Spaniels, Honey and Arthur and a Japanese Chin called Nina – none of whom have yet trashed his beautiful garden in the Cotswolds.

But then Hervey-Brookes is confident that you can easily share your space with your pooches without having them dig up the lawn or eat your prized flowers.

His show garden, A Dog's Life, for this year's Hampton Court Flower Show should give owners food for thought.

Features include sniffer tracks weaving through the herbaceous borders for dogs to forage and sniff out treats, a woodland area which incorporates a ramp over a raised wall for agility, while leaf litter areas within the planting allows dogs to dig and scratch.

"Arthur is a bit more boisterous than the other two and likes to run around and run through things, which is what gave us the idea of making these little weaving paths," Hervey-Brookes explains.

"The damage that was happening was accidental, because of his excitement, so we looked at how we could accommodate that in a way that keeps the garden looking attractive, not ruined."

Honey likes rolling around in the gravel or on grass, while Nina enjoys foraging for little chews and treats which her master leaves hidden for her to find in the garden.

"She'd find them and chew and have a little sleep, just to help calm her down. We used a lot of planting in the garden which has that calming quality, like lavender, so that going out for a walk became much more of a place where they run and bound. Going into the garden is much more gentle exercise. There's a bit of training there."

His dogs have been trained to do their business at a particular point on a gravel path, which makes it easier to clean up.



Amateur gardeners could make raised beds incorporating tunnels under them, so their dogs have things to run through.

"As long as that inquisitive characteristic is being channelled, the chances are they're not going to get bored and just dig in one place."

"Dogs don't destructively dig things up just for the sake of it. If a foliage is scented, they might rub up against it or have a little nibble, but nine times out of 10 that's as

far as it goes.

"It's about thinking sensibly. If you've got alliums which are a bit fragile, don't plant them right at the front of the border, let them grow through something like a woody shrub, so there's less risk of damage."

Retain a good structural backbone of shrubs, which will keep the garden looking neat all year round, he advises.

"Use robust, hard-working perennials which are going to have a long season of interest and don't mind taking the odd knock. There's no point using very delicate plants which your pet might damage because you're just going to get cross with the dog."

"We plant agastache because it's self-supporting, with robust foliage and a lot of flower for a long season, monarda and alchemilla, as opposed to using things like delicate aquilegia which won't stand up to a garden being used."

Avoid anything poisonous – a list from The Dogs Trust (www.dogstrust.org.uk) is available online – like foxglove, holly (the berries are poisonous), and achillea (the foliage is poisonous to dogs).

The trust, which is sponsoring Hervey-Brookes' show garden at Hampton Court, also suggests owners regularly check for any gaps that their dog can wriggle through.

A variety of textures in your garden can provide extra sensory stimulation - this could be non-toxic sand, grass, wood chippings or gravel, all of which provide interesting places to hide dog toys and treats and for your dog to explore.

RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show runs from July 5-10. For details, visit www.rhs.org.uk



Verbena is a popular sight in hanging baskets and pots

Beautiful perennial has many attractive varieties

BEST OF THE BUNCH – Verbena

OF course, the beautiful perennial Verbena bonariensis is a must for its delicate 'see-through' character and height without weight, giving value to a sunny border or in gravel.

But the low-growing tender perennial verbena, usually grown as an annual, is also featured prominently in baskets and pots. Add organic matter to the soil before planting, deadhead regularly and water in dry weather. Trailing varieties in the Cascade Series have small bloom clusters in shades of purple, blue, pink, red and white, while the Tapien series has larger, rounded flower clusters. Try V. 'Sissinghurst', with its large round clusters of magenta-pink flowers.

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT – Perpetual spinach THIS healthy green leaf can give you spinach all year round, although it tastes slightly different to 'real' spinach – a bit like Swiss chard – and the leaves are shinier and a bit tougher.

It can be sown from April to July thinly in rows where you want the plant to crop. Space seedlings by thinning to 15cm (6in) apart with 30cm between rows. Keep plants well watered

and weed regularly. Use them as soon as leaves are large enough to pick. Sow a row or two mid-summer under cover and the plants should stay in good condition through the winter and start growing again in spring.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

1. Prune shrubs including chaenomeles, deutzia, philadelphus, weigela and spiraea as soon as they have finished flowering.
2. Use markers to indicate the location of bulb clumps if you are planning to do any major planting later this year.
3. Thin out any hardy annuals that are still too closely packed.
4. Trim herbaceous geraniums using a pair of shears to remove faded flowers, helping the plants to remain bushy and, in many cases, produce a second flush of flowers later in the summer or early autumn.
5. Continue to pinch out shoot tips on summer bedding to help the plants remain bushy and not become straggly.
6. Use edging shears to neaten up lawn edges once a week and throw the trimmings onto the compost heap.

Flowering trees are the stars of summertime

ROSS UNDERWOOD

Head Gardener at Hodnet Hall



WHERE has summer gone? I am sure that I am not the only person asking that question after those blistering hot days that now seem like a memory of last summer rather than this one!

Our gardens are running at full speed ahead and as well as the roses and herbaceous plants doing their stuff there are some superb flowering trees.

You might not see them in every garden but if you have space they are worth seeking out or if you don't have room then go and see them at a garden or arboretum while they last.

My premier choice of summer flowering tree is Magnolia obovata (syn hypoleuca) which is an extremely handsome and graceful tree which hails from Japan. It grows in moist soils in and at the edge of woodland.

The young shoots have a purplish tinge when they emerge and the very large leaves are held at the end of the shoots.

It is a tree worth growing for the leaves alone but the real wow are the flowers which are large; up to 20cm across; creamy white with a central boss of crimson stamens and very fragrant.

The smell is like a mixture of honey and gardenias and on a still evening with a little warmth and moisture the scent can carry a great distance.

Spreading

Japan and Korea are also host to another stunning summer Magnolia. Magnolia sieboldii which is more of a spreading shrub that produces nodding white flowers like an upturned teacup.

The flowers can appear from May to August though it depends on the summer but the fruit clusters which are bright red are spectacular.

If I have chosen two magnolias from Asia then I have to choose one from America though not just for balance. Magnolia macrophylla would make it onto anybody's top ten list.

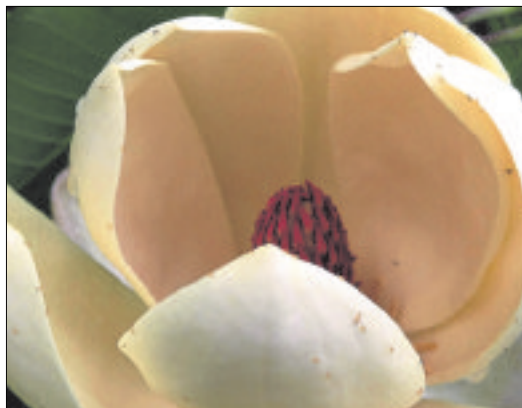
Coming from the south eastern USA it has perhaps the largest leaves of any deciduous plant that is hardy in the UK. These leaves can often exceed two feet in length, are somewhat glaucous beneath and need a little protection from the wind as they can tear. The flowers are like upright white candles marked with purple at the base and carry a spicy fragrance.

Stewartia is a genus of trees which produce camellia like flowers in summer. They prefer acid soil and although they like their tops in the sun they like their roots in the shade. Individually the flowers last only a short time, falling like snow beneath the tree.

The flowers are produced in succession giving a longevity of interest. Added to



Styx Japonicus is an exceptionally fragrant small tree with dainty flowers hanging under the branches



The graceful Magnolia Obvata hails from Japan



Stewartia pseudocamellia is best for general planting

which the autumn colour can be spectacular and the bark which flakes in an interesting pattern gives winter interest. This is a good all rounder for many gardens. S. pseudocamellia is usually the one that is encountered by most visitors to the nursery or garden centre and is perhaps the best for general planting though if you come across the Koreana Group then you should buy it as it is an improvement over the straight species in many ways.

Whereas Stewartia is not fragrant, Styx japonicus is exceptionally fragrant small tree which often has a semi pendant

habit adding an extra element of grace. Not that this plant needs too much help to look graceful. The clusters of bell shaped white flowers with prominent yellow anthers which hang on the underside of the branches are dainty and the tree is hardy. It is best planted where it can be admired close up or better still where you can look up into the flowers. There are a number of purple leaved cultivars which can be found at the more specialist nurseries including 'Purple Dress'. The flowers on many of these are tinged pink which only adds to their charm.

Finally, spare a thought for those opening their gardens for the NGS. The yellow book scheme raises huge amounts of money for very worthwhile charities and the gardeners who open their gardens work very hard.

Whatever the weather I would urge anybody to go out and support a garden which is open for charity, for whatever charity. Indeed a visit in adverse weather can be extremely instructive as the better the garden the better it stands up to scrutiny even in the rain.

You might even encounter some of these wonderful summer flowering trees!

Bluetooth cheat is jailed over theory test

A FRAUDSTER who attempted to cheat his way through his driving theory test has been jailed.

Sarbjit Singh, aged 30, of Rowley Regis, wore a Bluetooth device which was connected to his mobile phone in the hope of being fed the answers from someone outside.

He was linked to 10 other incidences of theory test Bluetooth fraud at test centres around the country in Uxbridge, Milton Keynes, Harrogate, Stratford, Cheltenham, Buih Wells and also Worcester.

Singh, of Regis Heath Road, was handed a 32-month prison sentence at Hereford Crown Court.

Identity

He was arrested at a test centre in Worcester in April.

He was charged with a total of 10 offences of fraud by false representation for each theory test that was undertaken and one count of obstructing police, relating to giving false details to police officers regarding his identity.

Andy Rice, head of counter fraud at the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

By Simon Stone

(DVSA), said: "Although instances of Bluetooth fraud are rare in relation to the 1.8 million theory tests which are taken each year, DVSA continues to take them seriously, and work closely with the police to bring offenders to justice."

"This sentence sends out a clear message that those who put road users and the public at risk by cheating the driving test process, will be pursued and prosecuted."

Bluetooth fraud involves an individual wearing a Bluetooth device on their person linked to a hidden mobile phone. This allows a connection with an individual outside of the test station who will attempt to provide the candidate with answers.

Funding ends for OAPs' activity centre



Disappointed – Fran Cartwright and Sandy Jones at the Age UK Springboard activity centre in Brierley Hill

A POPULAR activity centre which supports thousands of elderly people in the Black Country could be forced to shut after losing out on vital funding.

The Age UK Springboard activity centre based at the Waterfront, Brierley Hill, may close by the end of September after missing out on Big Lottery cash.

Age UK has received funding from Big Lottery for the past six years but this year the application was refused.

Bosses are now trying to find out why and are also looking for other funding options to help secure the centre's future so it can remain open.

Sandy Jones, who works at the centre, said: "We are now looking for other services to help us as we could close by September 30. We help more than 17,000 older people every year and we hope that with the help of others we can still continue to provide these services."

The centre has 53 staff and more than 300 volunteers who run various health and wellbeing activities for the elderly.

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Matthew Jamieson gives his top tips for better swimming



Swimming is the best all-round workout, ticking the cardio box and full-body strengthening

All-round exercise for all types of swimmer

By Abi Jackson

IT'S one of the most popular forms of exercise – and for good reason.

For starters, swimming's the best all-round workout, ticking the cardio box and full-body strengthening (which makes it a great cross-training addition, whether you're a runner, cyclist, dancer etc); it's a life skill; and widely accessible.

"Swimming is the one activity you can do throughout your life, from birth through to older age," says Ian Freeman, coaching system technical lead at the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA; www.swimming.org/asa).

As well as being great at relaxing the mind and providing a social environment, because water supports up to 90 per cent of the body's weight, swimming is the perfect way for people with impairments, injuries or illnesses to stay active.

This is a big part of why swimming's the most popular exercise among older age groups. Freeman notes that the ASA has also developed Dementia Friendly Swimming sessions to support people living with dementia, and their carers, in staying active.

Positive waves

Despite these benefits, ASA figures suggest one in five UK adults can't swim, while Speedo recently found more than two-thirds (69 per cent) can't swim more than 100m, and one in three admit they're not confident in water.

A survey by Fusion Lifestyle, a charity that manages 80 public pools across the UK, found that 'fear of water or drowning' is the most common reason (20 per cent) given by non-swimmers, while nine per cent blamed low body-confidence and not wanting to be seen in a swimming costume. The good news is these things can all be overcome. The thought of stripping down to a cossie does fill lots of people with dread – but swimming's actually a fantastic way to take the focus off body-image woes, as it encourages you to shift the focus from what your body looks like, to how great the freedom of being in water, and getting fitter, feels (plus you'll soon realise that humans come in all shapes and sizes and nobody really cares!).

Building confidence in the water might take time, but it's possible, and group or one-on-one lessons and coaching's widely available – sometimes for free. Enquire at your local leisure centre, visit the ASA website and check out www.fusion-lifestyle.com/adultswim. Also, Speedo is offering free 60-minute swim fitness sessions with instructors across the UK until October (www.speedo.co.uk/dive-in).

With the Rio Olympics on the approach, and triathlons growing ever more popular, there is much more emphasis on 'training' nowadays, but if you're happy with your gentle, leisurely swims, that's great too – they'll still be doing the world of good.

Freeman agrees that it's "absolutely" worthwhile doing leisurely lengths.



Swimming is the one activity you can do throughout your life, from birth through to older age



Why not join a swimming club for extra support and advice?

"A gentle swim can burn over 200 calories in half an hour – more than double that of walking – while a faster swim would see that indulgent chocolate bar gone quicker than if you went running or cycling. Plus, because exercising in water makes your body work harder, 30 minutes in a pool is worth 45 minutes of the same activity on land," he explains. "By combining 30 minutes of swimming three or more times per week alongside a balanced, healthy diet and lifestyle is one of the best ways to reduce body fat and maximise weight losses and maintain a positive mental wellbeing."

If you are looking to really improve your performance in the pool or pursue goals, Freeman suggests joining a local swimming club, a "great way to get tips on developing your swimming as well as having the support of other swimmers".

If you'd like to structure your own swims, as a good High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workout – which is proven to increase metabolism – he suggests starting with a 10-minute warm-up using any stroke, followed by eight lengths with your fastest stroke with 10 seconds' rest between efforts, and a five-minute cool-down.



Ian Freeman, ASA coaching system technical lead

Scottish swimmer Michael Jamieson, who scooped silver at London 2012 in the men's 200m breaststroke and is now a Speedo Dive In ambassador, has these top three tips: "Work on the rhythm of your breathing. This will allow you to swim for longer, and doesn't sap your energy so much.

"Secondly, work on your leg kick with freestyle. Kicks are really important, taking the stress and strain off your shoulders and sending you through the water faster.

"And thirdly, swim at a lower intensity for longer, rather than trying to swim fast but as far."

New alert as balcony death rate on the rise

Balcony deaths have become an all-too-common holiday horror, resulting in renewed alerts for tourists to play safe abroad. Here SARAH MARSHALL looks at a new prevention campaign launched by travel association ABTA

RESULTING in injury and in some cases even death, accidents on hotel balconies have caused serious concern for travel agents and authorities in the last few years.

So much so, in fact, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and travel association ABTA have renewed calls for Brits to use balconies safely when holidaying abroad.

This year alone, three serious falls have been reported – one involving a 34-year-old British man who jumped from his balcony into the hotel swimming pool earlier this month and is in a critical condition after suffering a spinal cord injury.

In September last year, mum-of-three Emma Evans was tragically killed after falling from a 50ft balcony in Mallorca.

Accidents happen for a number of reasons, and in many cases they could be avoided.

Nikki White, ABTA's director of destinations and sustainability, said: "As we head into the peak summer season, we are again urging holidaymakers to think about the potential risks of balconies.

Impact

"We see too many people badly injured or much worse because they've tried to climb over, jump or dive from their hotel balcony. A moment of thoughtlessness can have a devastating impact, not just on the holidaymaker themselves, but also on their family and friends."

In conjunction with the FCO, ABTA have published a series of safety guidelines online and as part of a poster campaign.

They recommend tourists never lean, climb or sit on balcony walls or railings, and even passing items from one balcony to another is discouraged.

Tourists should never jump into pools from their balcony, and should take particular care after drinking alcohol.

Will Middleton, FCO consular director for Southern Europe, said: "A momentary lapse of judgement can lead to a lifetime of consequences. So think balcony safety, look out for friends and avoid doing anything that might cost a life."



Top 10 tips for managing constipation on holiday

1. In the week before you go away, try and get a good bowel routine going. You don't want to go on holiday already constipated, as that might make you even more anxious.

2. As soon as you start travelling, whether by car, plane or boat, get up, stretch and walk around. The key is to get into a rhythm and don't sit down for long stretches.

3. It's easy to start drinking alcohol early while getting into the holiday spirit. Try and have one glass of water for each alcoholic drink, and keep hydrated at all times. Being dehydrated can cause constipation and bloating.

4. Try and eat at the same time as at home, this will help you stick to your usual pooing regime.

5. Whatever the local cuisine, try and include fresh fruit, vegetables, some wholegrains and pulses. If you are struggling to find any fibre, eat apples or keep some oatakes in your bag.

6. Probiotic yoghurts might also help prevent bloating.

7. Where possible, choose wholegrains like wholemeal bread, brown or basmati rice, and wholemeal spaghetti.

8. Keep moving and active, walking, swimming, even stretching, anything to help your gut move.

9. Avoid loads of white bread, pastries, cakes, and if you are on an all-inclusive holiday, it's easy to be tempted to eat too much, which can lead to bloating. Choose wisely and don't overload your plate.

10. Certain foods can slow digestion: red meat, high fat foods and unripe bananas. Caffeine can have the opposite effect if you are dehydrated as well, so if drinking coffee, drink a glass of water too.

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FENSA

Teenage talent gets a showcase



Lucy Walter, aged 13, with some of her cupcakes

THE talent of young entrepreneurs in the area was clear for all to see when a Teenage Market was held over the weekend in Wordsley.

The event took place for the first time at the Red House Glass Cone and provided a free platform for local teenagers to showcase their creative talents.

Among the young market traders was 19-year-old Georgia Lumley from Kingswinford, whose stall boasted a wide-range of jewellery.

Also on offer were a variety of crafts, clothes and food, produced and sold by teenagers, while other

Young entrepreneurs sold their wares at the Red Cone, Judith Hawkins reports

youngsters provided entertainment with live music and entertainment, including busker Harriet Larkin.

It followed the success of the first Teenage Market in Dudley back in October.

Return

Then 30 young stallholders and a range of performers took over Stone Street Square in the town centre for the day.

Delighted to see the event return was Mayor of Dudley Councillor Mohammed Hanif, who said: "I think it went really well, and the

talent among the youngsters that myself and the Mayoress saw was just amazing.

"It was fantastic to hear some of the stories behind how they started too.

"One example was a young lad we spoke to, aged just 13, who had watched his grandmother sewing by hand and decided to start sewing himself," added Councillor Hanif.

The Teenage Market is a growing nationwide initiative which was set up by teenage brothers Joe and Tom Barratt in Stockport, as a way to support local young people and transform town centres.

Its success has been labelled innovative and inspiring by retail guru Mary Portas, and has led to a string of similar events being held nationwide.

Hosting

Delighted to be hosting the event, a Facebook post by the Red House Glass Cone said: "What a brilliant day today at our first ever Teenage Market. The young stall holders and performers were delightful. Chatty, friendly and engaging. So proud of their skills."

The market is among the long list of events taking place as part of the Black Country Festival, which is running throughout this month (see page 19 for details).



Alice Conway, aged 18, with one of her hand crafted gifts



Georgia Lumley, aged 19, a jeweller from Kingswinford



Magician Jack Taylor, aged 15, entertained visitors

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Huge range of activities to make festival best yet

THE organisers of the Black Country Festival are keen to ensure the 2016 celebration surpasses the success of last year's festival.

And that was quite a triumph with well over 500 events.

Check out what's happening, below, in our part of the Black Country including a day of family fun in Dudley town centre on July 16.

JULY 9: Noon to 4pm - Wordsley Festival will be at King George V park.

JULY 9: Noon to 4pm - Gornal Fun day at the Recreation Ground in The Quarry Vale Street.

JULY 9: 9.30am to 4pm - The Black Country Fayre organised by the Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club takes place in Somers Square with great food, entertainment and stalls.

JULY 9: 9am to 5pm - Netherton Park Fun day.

JULY 9: 7.30pm - Black Country chamber choir Colla Voce perform classical choral music with a professional chamber orchestra and baritone soloist at St Michael's Church in Brierley Hill. Tickets £10 on the door.

JULY 9: 10.30am to 4pm - What's at the Top? Community Open Event at Top Church, Dudley, to explore new options for St Thomas & St Lukes. It will be a fun day for the family where you can meet a bird of prey and learn about craft skill.

JULY 10: 1pm to 5pm - Brockmoor and Pensnett Black Country Fun Day at the Dell Stadium.

JULY 14: 10.30am or 1pm - Tour of the new White House Cone at the Museum of Glass, Wordsley. Booking essential. £5.75 per person.

JULY 15: Dudley Canal Trust celebrates Black Country Day with 45 minute tunnel trips just 50p between 4pm to 7pm.

JULY 16: From 11am - thousands of people will be heading to Dudley for



Music is prominent in the festival



The focus is on fun for children too



Cheers - getting ready for the first Dudley Beer Festival at Brierley Hill Civic Hall special events in Stone Street Square.

JULY 16: Black Country Beer Day 2016. Organised by CAMRA. Contact 1954steve.thompson@blueyonder.co.uk

JULY 18: The Worcester Senior Cup which will see Stourbridge FC take on Kidderminster Harriers FC at the War Memorial Athletic Ground, Ambicote.

JULY 23: Dudley Town FC versus

Worcester City FC at The Dell Stadium.

JULY 29 to 30: SHOUT! is a fun, fab and frivolous show with girl singer hits from the 60s at Rowley Regis Learning Campus. Tickets are £12 and available at www.shout2016.co.uk

JULY 29 to 31: The festival closes with the inaugural Dudley Beer Festival at Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

RED HOUSE GLASS CONE

Join us on Black Country Day

Thursday 14th July

Guided Tours of the Red and White House Cones at 10.30am and 1pm with a chance to make a fused glass tile - £5.75 per person

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or visit **www.redhousecone.co.uk**

Red House Glass Cone, High Street, Wordsley DY8 4AZ

Facebook Red House Glass Cone • Twitter@redhousecone



BLACK COUNTRY FAYRE

9TH JULY

Organised by Halesowen & Rowley Regis Rotary Club

A Fantastic Family Day out in Halesowen

- » Stalls
- » Big stage and entertainment hosted by Black Country Radio
- » Stilt Walkers
- » Local band "Old Enough to Know Better"
- » Full farmers market with local produce

- » Micro brewery with local ales
- » Espresso bar with speciality coffees
- » Tombolas
- » Face painting and glitter tattoos for the kids!
- » Local arts and crafts

Being held at Somers Square, Halesowen

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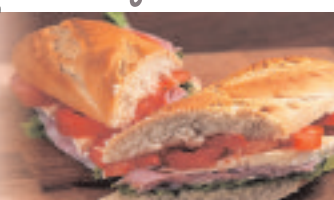
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Sri Lanka

Price Includes

- ✓ Return flights and 11 nights half-board accommodation
- ✓ Visit Kandy and see the Temple of the Tooth
- ✓ See the Royal Botanical Gardens
- ✓ Guided tour of the Royal Palace and Citadel at Sigiriya Rock
- ✓ Visit to Buddhist Monastery of Dambulla and Cave Temples
- ✓ Visit Pinnawela elephant orphanage and a Tea Estate
- ✓ Safari at Yala National Park
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

Upon arrival in Sri Lanka the senses are overwhelmed. The warm tropical air, the colourful wild flowers and the jungle. Visit three outstanding UNESCO World Heritage sites before the chance to relax at a beach-side hotel in Galle.

Enjoy a visit to Pinnawela Elephant orphanage and take some of the best photos of the whole tour, when the entire herd takes its daily bath in the river.

At Sigiriya, the 'Lion Rock', a 600ft granite tower with sheer cliffs, see the remains of the 1,500 year old royal palace and in Kandy, the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings, visit the fascinating Temple of the Tooth, which is said to hold Buddha's tooth.

The cave temples of Dambulla, a UN World Heritage site, showcases Sri Lanka's extraordinary artistic heritage whilst the stunning Royal Botanical Gardens, planted over 150 years and covering a huge 150 acres, visitors can see some superb examples of tropical trees, flower beds and exotic birds.

Driving through mountainous scenery, visit a tea estate and see how Britain's favourite drink is produced, before enjoying a cup of Ceylon's finest.

Also on the itinerary is the chance to take an exciting safari at Yala National Park, famed for its high concentration of leopards. There will also be the chance to see elephants, crocodiles and monitor lizards.



DAYS: 13 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES 2016/2017



From
£999

Washington, New York and Niagara Falls

Price Includes

- ✓ Return flights and six nights room-only accommodation
- ✓ Enjoy a day in Washington DC
- ✓ Visit Philadelphia and New York
- ✓ Spend time at Niagara Falls
- ✓ Optional excursions available to book
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)

Discover one of the world's greatest natural wonders, Niagara Falls, the historic legacies of US capitals past and present, Philadelphia and Washington DC, and all the mesmerising magic of New York, the 'city that never sleeps'.

Join the optional guided city tour, which highlights all the famous landmarks of the most powerful city on earth, Washington DC, and see the giant domed Capitol building, Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial and of course the White House itself, to name just a few.

Enjoy an included guided city tour in the original US capital, historic Philadelphia, which will bring to life the colourful story of America's birth and the characters of the men who wrought it.

In the incomparable Big Apple, perhaps the world's most famous and most exciting metropolis, explore the green acres of Central Park, the Fifth Avenue stores, glittering Broadway, bustling Time Square and the world-class museums. Optional excursions include a guided city tour and a breathtaking helicopter ride — to help make the most of this fascinating city.

Visit the bustling resort city nearby, before enjoying time at Niagara Falls. Gaze in awe as the water plunges over the famous precipices creating a roar, which can be heard for miles around. An optional helicopter flight is available to book, for a birds eye view.



DAYS: 8 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES 2016/2017

Costa Rica Nature's paradise

From
£2,399

Enjoy an incredible opportunity to experience Costa Rica's amazing natural beauty.

Explore the canopy of the Cloud Forest, see the mass of the Arenal volcano, and encounter some of the rarest and most colourful wildlife on the planet.

- ✓ Return flights
- ✓ 11 nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- ✓ Five lunches and three dinners
- ✓ Journey through the rainforest by boat to Tortuguero National Park
- ✓ Visit Eco Termales hot springs
- ✓ See amazing birdlife on a Caño Negro marshland cruise
- ✓ Visit the Hummingbird Garden at Selwatura
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)



DAYS: 13 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES 2017/2018

Japan Land of the Rising Sun

From
£3,159

Explore the very best of Japan's stunning temples and shrines, intriguing pagodas, manicured gardens, fast-paced cities, incredible cuisine and outstanding natural beauty.

The option to stay in a traditional Japanese Inn is also offered.

- ✓ Return flights
- ✓ 11 nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- ✓ Three meals and two journeys on bullet trains
- ✓ Visit the Nikko National Park
- ✓ Enjoy scenic views of Mount Fuji and visit Kego Falls
- ✓ Visit to Hiroshima's Peace Park and museum
- ✓ Scenic boat trip to the luxury shops in Ginza
- ✓ See the volcanic Owakudani by aerial gondola
- ✓ Tours of Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)



DAYS: 13 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES 2016/2017

India and Nepal The Ganges and Varanasi

From
£2,499

This epic journey encompasses India's greatest sights, including the Ganges, the unforgettable Taj Mahal, plus Nepal's majestic mountains and monuments.

There is also the chance of seeing Mount Everest from the air.

- ✓ Return flights
- ✓ 13 nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- ✓ Five meals
- ✓ Guided tours of Katmandu, Old and New Delhi
- ✓ Visits to the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Sarnath
- ✓ Evening and morning boat ride on the Ganges
- ✓ Ricksaw ride and city tour of Varanasi
- ✓ Take a flight over the Himalayas and see Mount Everest
- ✓ Elephant-back safari through Chitwan National Park
- ✓ Tour of Khajuraho temples and boat ride at Pokhara
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)



DAYS: 15 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES 2016/2017

Icons of the Orient China and Vietnam

From
£1,999

From the Great Wall to the vast Forbidden City; from Xi'an's excavated Terracotta Army to Chengdu's famous pandas; and from Hanoi's temples to the majestic seascape of Halong Bay — each wonderful highlight offers the experience of a lifetime.

- ✓ Return flights
- ✓ 11 nights accommodation with nine lunches and seven dinners
- ✓ Explore the Mekong Delta, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Beijing and the Cu Chi tunnel complex
- ✓ Visit the Great Wall, Chengdu's Wenshu Temple, Jinli Street and the Giant Panda Breeding Research Centre
- ✓ Guided tour of Xi'an including the Terracotta Army
- ✓ Spend a night on a traditional junk, cruising Halong Bay
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)



DAYS: 14 DEPARTS: VARIOUS DATES 2017

Prices are per person (unless otherwise stated) and based on two people sharing a room. Please read brochures/web pages for full description plus terms and conditions. Dates subject to availability. Please note the Star Reader Travel department is unable to take bookings.

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Kaisers' music lessons

In the woods – Page 25



Doreen on Brexit – 25

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15 AUG • RED BULL AIR RACE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
15 AUG • SOUTHPORT FLOWER SHOW
20 AUG • LIVERPOOL FC STADIUM TOUR & FOOTBALL MUSEUM
20 AUG • EBOR STAKES • EMMERDALE
28 AUG • NORTH SEA TALL SHIPS REGATTA
3 SEP • TOWER OF LONDON POPPES AT LINCOLN CASTLE
3 SEP • KYNREN AT AUCKLAND CASTLE (1898)
10 SEP • DULFORD AIR SHOW
10 SEP • CENTRE COURT AT WIMBLEDON
10 SEP • MAN UTD THREATS OF DREAMS
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2 DAYS **£99.95**

OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
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SAT 16 JUL, 6 AUG, 3 SEP, 15 OCT

BOURNEMOUTH & GUERNSEY CRUISE



5 DAYS FROM **£199.95**

4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Carrington House Hotel
Includes fantastic day trip to Guernsey

MON 25 JUL, 1, 8, 22, 29 AUG, 12, 19 SEP, 3 OCT

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BAR
6pm-9pm
(TBC APPLY)

5 DAYS FROM **£159.95**

4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD New Loretta Hotel
Includes visit to Snowdonia & the Isle of Anglesey and historic Conwy

MON 1, 15 AUG, 5, 19 SEP, 24 OCT, 28 NOV, 5 DEC

LONGLEAT SAFARI Jungle Cruise & Bath



2 DAYS **£99.95**

OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
Admission to Safari Park, Jungle Cruise, African Village, Longleat House & more plus visit to Bath

SAT 27 AUG, 1, 22 OCT

KYLE OF LOCHALSH BY TRAIN ISLE OF SKYE & STRATHSPEY STEAM



5 DAYS FROM **£259.95**

4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Mackays/Garve Hotel
Includes Scotrail train to Kyle of Lochalsh, Strathspey Steam Railway and visits to Loch Ness & Inverness

MON 8, 22 AUG, 12 SEP, 3 OCT

OSTEND & BRUGES



4/5 DAYS FROM **£199.95**

3/4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD New Astoria Hotel, Ostend
Full day excursion to Bruges & half day tour visiting Sluis in Holland

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5 DAYS MON 1, 15 AUG, 19 SEP, 24 OCT, 5 DEC

WARNER STUDIO TOUR Making of Harry Potter



2 DAYS **£119.95**

OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
Admission included plus visits to Science & Natural History Museums

SAT 20 AUG, 3, 24 SEP, 8 OCT, 12, 19, 26 NOV

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5 DAYS FROM **£219.95**

4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Camelot Castle Hotel
Includes trips to Rick Stein's Padstow & Doc Martin's Port Isaac

MON 5, 19, 26 SEP, 3, 10, 24 OCT

FOLKESTONE & CROSS CHANNEL CRUISE TO OSTEND



5 DAYS FROM **£189.95**

4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Burstin Hotel
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MON 18, 25 JUL, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 AUG, 5 SEP

LIVERPOOL BEATLES TOUR MERSEY CRUISE & CHESTER



2 DAYS **£79.95**

OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
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SAT 30 JUL, 13 AUG, 10, 24 SEP, 15, 29 OCT

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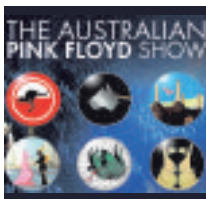
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Totally Tina



Friday, 7.30pm
Robin 2, Bilston

Described as Simply The Best tribute to Tina Turner, Justine Riddoch (above as Tina) headlined last year's Glastonbudget Festival and now brings her dynamic show to the Black Country. Visit www.therobin.co.uk

Chaplin



Thursday, 7.30pm
New Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

A musical play looking at the silent movie star's life in the music halls and Hollywood with Bryan Hodgson as Chaplin (above) and Coronation Street's Steven Arnold as his brother. Visit www.atgtickets.com/shows

Matt Cardle



Monday, 7pm

The Glee Club, B'ham

The 33-year-old X Factor 2010 winner from Southampton is now a veteran of three albums, defining himself as a songwriter as well as singer. See www.glee.co.uk/venues/birmingham

Mostly Jazz, Funk & Soul Festival



Friday to Sunday

Moseley Park, Birmingham

Actor and DJ Craig Charles (pictured) is among a fantastic line-up including George Clinton with Parliament Funkadelic, De La Soul, Grandmaster Flash, Average White Band and more. See mostlyjazz.co.uk

POP

Matt Cardle
Mon at 8pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham,
B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Scott Matthews
Tue at 7.30pm - 11pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham,
B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Arijit Singh
Tomorrow at 7pm,
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham,
B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

Endorphinmachine: Prince Tribute Act
Tomorrow,
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Charity Event In The Memory Of The Late Chelsea Jackson
Sun at 5.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Totally Tina: Tina Turner Tribute
Tonight at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Orchestras, Ensemble & Chamber, Rock, Pop And Urban
Tomorrow at 10.15am,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

ROCK & METAL

Paul Carrack
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, £28.50 - £38.50
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

The Sounds Of The Sixties
Tonight,
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Amped @The Slade Rooms
Tonight at 7.30pm,
The Slade Rooms,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

The Billy Fury Years Show: Billy Fury Tribute
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, £18.50
Prince Of Wales Centre,
Cannock, WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

Rock 'n' Roll Magic
Sun at 3pm - 6pm,
fletchers bar, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, B14 7SA.
Call 0121 4434725

RAP, RNB & REGGAE

KRS-One
Thu at 7pm - 11pm,
The Institute, Digbeth,
Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Bunny Wailer & Max Romeo (cancelled)
Tomorrow - Sun at 10pm - 3.30am,
O2 Academy Birmingham.
Call 0121 622 8250

JAZZ, BLUES, SOUL FUNK & MOTOWN

Jazzlines Free Gigs: The Weave
Tonight at 5pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

FOLK, COUNTRY & ACOUSTIC

CLASSICAL

Services For Education - Music Service Gala Concerts 2016
Sun at 6pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Music For Youth National Festival
Tonight, tomorrow,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Blake
Sun at 7.30pm - 9pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

CBSO 2015-16 Falstaff
Wed at 7pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

CLUBBING

Mostly Jazz Festival Afterparty: DJ Maseo
Tonight - tomorrow, at 10pm - 3am,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

Propaganda
Tonight - Tomorrow at 10.30pm - 3.30am,
O2 Academy Birmingham,
B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

DJ Luck and MC Neat
Tomorrow - Sun at 9pm - 3am,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

All Hands On Decks
Tonight at 8pm,
Light House, Wolverhampton,
WV1 1HT.
Call 01902 716055

FESTIVALS

On The Edge 2016
Today - tomorrow,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Mostly Jazz, Funk & Soul Festival
Today - Sun,
Moseley Park, Birmingham,
B13 8DD.
Call 0121 442 4499

OTHER EVENTS

VIP Record Fair
Tomorrow at 10am, £2
The Custard Factory, Birmingham,
B9 4AA.
Call 0121 224 7777

Cadbury Character Weekend
Tomorrow - Sun,
Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham,
B30 2LU.
Call 0844 880 7667

Junior Jesters #3
Sun at 4pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

An Audience With Martin Kemp
Wed at 8.30pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Young Artists
Tomorrow at 1pm - 3pm,
Wolverhampton Art Gallery,
WV1 1DU.
Call 01902 552055

Approaches To Aspects Of Drawing
Tomorrow at 11am - 4pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Great British Food Festival
Tomorrow at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm,
The Shugborough Estate, Milford, ST17 0XB.
Call 01889 881388

Kings Heath Food Assembly
Tue at 7.30pm - 9pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham,
B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

COMEDY

Severn Jesters #46
Sun at 8pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT. Call 01743 281281

Andrew Lawrence: Uncensored
Tonight at 7pm - 10.30pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham,
B5 4TD. Call 0871 472 0400

Zoe Lyons: Little Misfit
Tomorrow at 8pm,
The Old Rep Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DY.
Call 0121 605 5116

Wifi Wars
Sun at 1.15pm, 6.15pm,
The Slade Rooms,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Ben Hanlin: Trickhead: Edinburgh Preview
Tonight at 8pm,
The Old Rep Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DY.
Call 0121 605 5116

EdinBum Previews: Lloyd Langford & Peter Brush
Thu at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Thursday Night Comedy Carousel
Thu at 8pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham,
B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

The Best In Live Stand-up Comedy
Tonight at 8.15pm, Tomorrow at 8.15pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham,
B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Mark Watson: I'm Not Here
Tomorrow at 8pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Joe Lycett: That's The Way, A-Ha A-Ha, Joe Lycett
Sun at 8pm, £10 - £12
New Alexandra Theatre,
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Heartbeat
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Hot Ginger's Swing Dance Classes
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Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham,
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Call 0844 870 0000

Dogfight
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 7.30pm,
Thu at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Doreen's Grand Night Out
Wed at 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
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Call 01902 573320

Back To Bacharach
Thu at 7.30pm,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
Call 01543 412121

Let's Go To The Movies: Telford Academy Of Performing Arts
Tomorrow at 1pm, 5.30pm,
Oakengates Theatre, Telford,
TF2 6EP.
Call 01952 382382

The Musicals: TACT
Thu at 7.30pm,
Oakengates Theatre, Telford,
TF2 6EP.
Call 01952 382382

Why Do Hyenas Have Shorter Back Legs Than Front Legs And Why Do Monkeys Have Bare Bottoms?
Tomorrow at 11am, 4.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Twenty-Five Years At CHB Performance Arts
Sun at 2.30pm,
Prince Of Wales Centre,
Cannock, WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

Reinraumraus
Tomorrow at 11.30am, 2.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Elmhurst Dance School
Thu at 7pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

The Sitcom Trials
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Chaplin: The Charlie Chaplin Story
Wed at 7.30pm,
Atrix, Bromsgrove, B61 1PQ.
Call 01527 577330

Les Miserables: School Edition: Get Your Wigle On
Thu at 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Musical Youth Theatre Stafford: Buggy Malone
Tonight at 7.30pm, Tomorrow at 2.30pm, 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT.
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Music fans will head to the Forest



Fans predict a musical riot when the Kaiser Chiefs, fronted by Ricky Wilson, play Cannock Chase on Sunday

"If you go down to the woods this summer, you're sure of a big surprise." So says Kaiser Chiefs frontman Ricky Wilson as his band plays at this weekend's Forest Live concerts on Cannock Chase.

"We've always loved to play outdoors. We've done fields, parks, farms, rooftops, beaches and back gardens, but this will be the first time we've played in a forest," said the 38-year-old Keighley-born singer,

who is the most successful judge on TV's The Voice. Kaiser Chiefs are currently working on album number six, while new single Parachute is out on October 7.

Support for the KCs' gig on Sunday comes from Vitamin and Spring King with the concert from 7pm being the last of three sold-out events in the forest this weekend.

Singer-songwriter James Bay is tomorrow night's (Friday) headline

act. Fans of the 2016 Brit Award Best Male Artist will be able to hear tracks from top-selling album Chaos and the Calm, including Hold Back The River. Support by the trio Joseph at 7.45pm.

Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott are Saturday's main attraction with songs from second album Wisdom, Laughter and Lines, as well as favourites from The Beautiful South. Support comes from Devlin Brothers (6.50pm) followed by Leisure Society.



Doreen has a Grand plan

BLACK Country comedy character Doreen Tipton is likely to give her thoughts on how to sort out Brexit Britain with her shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Wednesday and Thursday, July 13 and 14.

Following the EU Referendum, Doreen has broken into the world of politics with hilarious consequences via her own political broadcast, that has become an online hit.

As leader of the Yam Yam Party she has decided to stand up for the 'little folk' now the 'un-erected bureaucrats' have left the Black Country 'without a paddle'.

She talks about how the vote has hit the markets – mainly Bilston and Brierley Hill markets – and how it has alienated young people 'after a quarter of them got out of bed to vote'.

Her party has three pledges – to never lie, use no confusing statistics and sort out immigration by building a wall around the Black Country to keep out the Brummies.

Following on from the success of Doreen: The Movie and now her own online TV channel – Doreen TV – the character, created by actress Gill Jordan and writer David Tristram, has been selling out venues from Bewdley to Brum on her Grand Night Out tour.

With a mixture of satirical stand-up (or sit-down, when she needs a rest), music and video surprises, Doreen will assess the state of the nation as only she can. The show is recommended for over-15s and tickets cost from £11.50 to £16.50. See www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01902 429212.

Assessing state of the nation as only she can

Falstaff opera will end CBSO season

THE City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra finishes its latest season with a performance of Verdi's comic opera Falstaff.

The concert in Symphony Hall, Birmingham, is on Wednesday, July 13 at 7pm. Tickets are £21 to £48 for the concert in which the CBSO is joined by singer Ambrogio Maestri in the title role and the CBSO Chorus. It is being sung in Italian.

Meanwhile, the Music For Youth National Festival continues in and around the Symphony Hall. Hear music all day by brass and wind bands today (Thursday) and tomorrow, including Cannock Performing Arts Centre Wind Band on Friday.

Showcase stage for young dance talent

STUDENTS at the Elmhurst School of Dance, the associate ballet school to Birmingham Royal Ballet, will be performing a Summer show at Birmingham Rep on July 14, 15 and 16.

Performed in association with Birmingham Royal Ballet, Summer Synchronisation will showcase the talents of students aged 11 to 19 years from the school in Edgbaston.

Performances embrace a range of dance styles from classical to hip hop via flamenco and jazz. It will include one-act ballet Elite Synchronisations by Kenneth MacMillan. For tickets visit birmingham-rep.co.uk or call 0121 236 4455.

Scott tops bill at songwriter festival

SINGER-SONGWRITER Scott Matthews headlines a mini-festival in his home city on Saturday, at the Banstock Songwriter's Garden party.

From 4 to 10pm Bantock Park, on Finchfield Road, Wolverhampton, will host an impressive line-up of talented musicians.

The event starts with Sharodene and continues with Gary O'Dea, Saltflat, Ryan Evans, Under A Banner, Alex Ohm, Terry & Gerry, with Matthews – who has released four studio albums – taking the stage at 9pm.

For tickets see www.wolvescivic.co.uk or call 0870 320 7000.

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DIGITAL



The day of reckoning arrives for the wasshackling heroes, as the murderous Grimaud set in motion a series of savage, coordinated attacks designed to eliminate the Musketeers for good. Despite receiving Grimaud's direct attention, Athos manages to escape with his life, and sets out to warn his comrades they will be next on the hit-list. Meanwhile, Athos finds his affair with Queen Anne in the forefront of his mind as he accompanies King Louis on an annual pilgrimage to mark his royal father's death. Starring Santiago Cabrera, Tom Burke, Talissa Teixeira, Luke Pasqualino, Tamla Kari, Howard Charles, Matthew McNulty, Rupert Everett, Lukas Józka, Andre Flynn, Hugo Speer and Ryan Gage.

12.45 Film: *The Resident*. (2011) A doctor moves into a spacious new apartment, but realises her landlord is dangerously obsessed with her. Horror, starring Hilary Swank, Jeffrey Dean Morgan and Christopher Lee. **2.10**

Weather for the Week Ahead. 2.15 BBC News

to an important potential client. Drama, with Kevin Spacey. **1.55 Film:** Down Terrace. (2009) Father-and-son gangsters are released from prison and try to identify the informant in their organisation. Crime comedy, starring real-life father and son Robin and Robert Hill. **3.25 This Is BBC Two**

12.50 Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.

3.00 Murder, She Wrote. Jessica is taken hostage. (R) **3.50 ITV Nightscreen**

11.35 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares
USA. Gordon Ramsay is in New Jersey to help Rose Leone, who spent two years in a coma and came out of hospital to learn her son had run her beloved Italian restaurant into the ground. (R)

10.00 Big Brother. Catching up with the Big Brother contestants as they react to Friday night's live eviction, revealing how another departure has affected the rest of the house.

Nightscreen 2.30 Teleshopping
ITV4
12.00 Goodwood Festival of Speed **1.00**
 Tour of France Highlights **2.00** Tour de
 France Live. Coverage of stage eight of
 this year's race. **4.30** Storage Wars **6.00**
 Monster Carp **7.00** Tour of France
 Highlights **8.00 Film:** The Spy Who
 Loved Me **1977** **9.05 FYI** Daily **9.10**
Film: The Spy Who Loved Me (1977)
10.40 Film: A Dangerous Man (2010)
11.40 FYI Daily **11.45 Film:** A Dangerous
 Man (2010) **12.35** Motorway Patrol **1.00**
 Tour of France Highlights **2.00** The Wine
 Show **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00**
 Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Rich Kids of Instagram **12.00** New Girl **12.30** The Goldbergs **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Snow White & the Huntsman (2012) **11.30** Gogglebox
1.40 Rude Tube **3.30** The New Normal
4.10 Rude(ish) Tube **4.35** Revenge

Film4
11.00 Bend of the River (1952) **1.00** Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World (2011)
2.40 Rango (2011) **4.50** Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events (2004) **6.55** The Way Way Back (2013)
9.00 Aliens (1986) **12.00** Alien 3 (1992)
2.15 The Pact (2012) **21.4.00** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Lost Letter Mysteries: The Impossible Dream, Channel 5, 3.15pm

The team of postal detectives works against the clock to decode a letter that could hold the key to saving the life of a US military medic in Afghanistan who is being held as a prisoner of war. Meanwhile, Rita competes in the Miss Special Delivery contest. Mystery drama, starring Eric Mabius, Kristin Booth and Crystal Lowe. (2015)

WEDNESDAY

Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps, Channel 4, 1.35am

Ruthless stockbroker Gordon Gekko is released from prison after eight years, reinventing himself as an author and lecturer warning against the dangers of the financial system. Gekko helps a young banker get revenge on the company that drove his mentor to suicide, but as always, has a crooked agenda of his own. Oliver Stone's sequel to his 1980s drama, with Michael Douglas, Shia LaBeouf and Carey Mulligan. (2010)



Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy, Friday, BBC1, 11.35pm

THURSDAY

Columbo: Fade in to Murder, ITV, 11.10pm

An actor who plays a detective on a soap opera is being blackmailed by his ex-lover, who is also his producer. Convinced that playing a sleuth makes him clever enough to get away with murder, he kills her and frames her husband – but has reckoned without the intervention of the crumpled cop. Crime drama, with Peter Falk, William Shatner, Lola Albright, Alan Manson and Walter Koenig. (1976)

FRIDAY

Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy, BBC1, 11.35pm

The chauvinistic host of a top-rated American news programme in 1970s San Diego fights for his status and job security when both are threatened by the arrival of an ambitious female reporter, whose determination to become a newsreader leads to a bitter battle of the sexes. Comedy, starring Will Ferrell, Christina Applegate, Fred Willard, Steve Carell, Paul Rudd, David Koechner, Vince Vaughn and Ben Stiller. (2004)

A new set of youngsters put themselves to the test

Three of TV's hardest quiz shows – Only Connect, University Challenge and Mastermind – all return to BBC Two this week, ready to challenge viewers' intellects and make some of us feel a little bit dim. (Although at least with Mastermind we can reassure ourselves that it's nearly impossible to see on someone else's specialist subject).

However, the show most likely to leave viewers feeling somewhat inadequate is arguably Child Genius, which is back for a fourth series on Channel 4.

For newcomers, the programme follows some of the country's cleverest eight to 12-year-olds as they battle it out to be crowned Britain's brightest child in the now annual competition, which is organised in association with British Mensa.

It's not just about the questions. The series also follows the kids and their families, offering an insight into what it's like to be a gifted youngster and the different ways their parents have of dealing with the challenges

involved. It also gives viewers an opportunity to weigh up the age-old nature versus nurture debate, as they ask themselves whether the kids were just born bright, or if their intellectual ability is at least partly down to parental encouragement.

However, what we do see of the competition can be tough, and in this first episode, the contestants will be facing the very demanding maths and memory rounds.

So perhaps it's reassuring that this year the questions will be asked by someone with a track record for putting nervous contestants at ease – Pointless co-host Richard Osman. Although sadly on this show, no one can simply answer 'Central African Republic' and hope for the best.

Osman is certainly a fan of the programme, saying: "I jumped at the chance to get involved with Child Genius. The previous series have been so warm and charming, and such a celebration of bright and funny kids.

"I know I would have taken part in the show if it had been around when

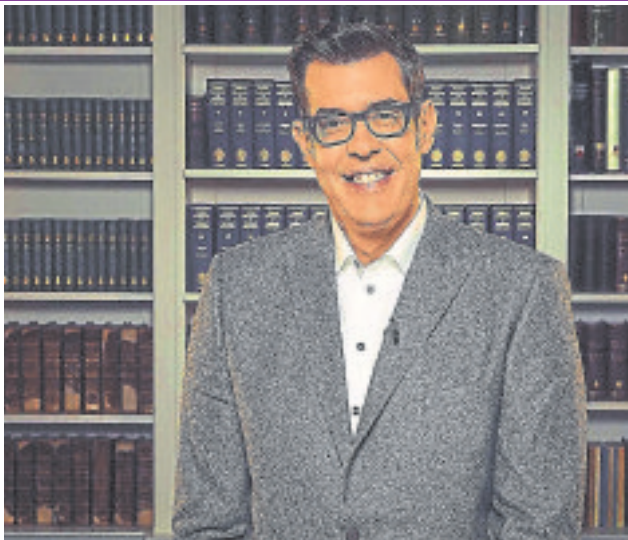
I was young. I would have lost very badly though."

Hopefully, this year's class of Child Geniuses are feeling more confident. The chances are that 12-year-old Mog is up for the challenge, as he put himself forward in the hopes of proving that you don't need a pushy parent behind you to win.

Some of the families featured are taking a slightly more hands-on approach though, including Simon from Essex, who has spent the past three years preparing his 11-year-old son Christopher for the show. Their training has included analysing every previous episode to find potential winning strategies.

Meanwhile, Hayley should also be well prepared – her eldest child Curtis took part two years ago, and now she's back with her 11-year-old daughter Sophia.

And we also get to meet Max, whose mum Fanny is hoping that the process will encourage him to embrace his intellect. But given that the youngster has ADHD, how will he respond to the competition?



Richard Osman features, Child Genius, Tuesday, Channel 4, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Only Connect

BBC2, 8.30pm

New series. Victoria Coren Mitchell returns with the quiz show as another batch of teams of three use patience, lateral thinking and sheer inspiration to make connections between four things that may appear at first not to be linked, hoping to succeed reigning champions the String Section. In the opening edition of the 12th series, London Underground enthusiasts the Tubers take on Shakespeare lovers the Bardophiles, with one set of clues consisting of Brownies, Michael Fagan, Freddie Krueger and Milk Tray Man.

Exodus: Our Journey to Europe
BBC2, 9pm

We've all seen the upsetting footage of people desperately trying to make the hazardous journey from their war-torn homelands to the relative safety of Europe as they attempt to escape danger and persecution. As distressing as this footage is, brief glimpses during news reports don't really paint a true picture of the horrors these reluctant travellers have faced, and that's where this documentary comes in. It charts the efforts of those involved via camcorders handed to migrants during their journeys, which allowed them to capture the most perilous moments

they faced. The result is a unique and extremely personal insight into the reality of being forced to flee your home and fearing for your life and those of your loved ones while facing an uncertain future.

TUESDAY

Love Your Garden

ITV, 8pm

Alan Titchmarsh and his team visit Canterbury to help Gurkha Hari Budha Magar, who lost the use of both his legs in Afghanistan in an IED incident. Though Hari thinks nothing of going out of his way to help others, most recently helping pensioners whose homes were hit by the floods in Cumbria, his own garden is a challenge he has to yet to overcome. So the team transform his overlooked plot into a colourful private sanctuary that nods to his Nepalese homeland, and there is a surprise appearance by Joanna Lumley.

WEDNESDAY

Long Lost Family

ITV, 9pm

New series. Two adopted people born on opposite sides of the world search for their birth mothers in Singapore, and the team makes

a discovery that nobody could have predicted. Meanwhile, 29-year-old paediatric nurse Anna London-Truckle is desperate to reconnect with her birth mother, who made the ultimate sacrifice to give her daughter a better chance at life. Anna was adopted by a British couple at the age of two, but with no memories of her beginnings, she now feels disconnected from her roots in Riobamba, Ecuador.

THURSDAY

Golf: The Open Championship

BBC2, 8pm

Hazel Irvine presents the best action from the opening day of the 145th staging of the Major, which is being held at Royal Troon in South Ayrshire. Eight Open Championships have been held at Troon, but it's been 12 years since Todd Hamilton shocked the golfing world with his win at the 2004 tournament. The

iconic eighth hole, 'the Postage Stamp' is one of the shortest par threes in professional golf and will attract plenty of attention. However, at more than 7,200 yards there's enough length to test the world's best players. American Zach Johnson entered as the reigning champion, after he won the Claret Jug 12 months ago following a three-man play-off against Marc Leishman and Louis Oosthuizen at St Andrews. But the British challenge should be strong this year, particularly after Danny Willett joined the major winners' club with a cool-headed Masters win.

FRIDAY

BBC Proms 2016

BBC2, 7.30pm

New series. Part one. From London's Royal Albert Hall, Katie Derham introduces the first night of the annual music festival. Proceedings begin with Tchaikovsky's Fantasy Overture to Romeo and Juliet, the first in a series of musical works during the season marking 400 years since the death of Shakespeare. Argentine cellist Sol Gabetta then makes her Proms debut in Elgar's haunting Cello Concerto, the first of 10 concertos for the instrument to be performed over the next few weeks. Sakari Oramo conducts the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Coverage continues on BBC Four.



Long Lost Family, Wednesday, ITV, 9pm

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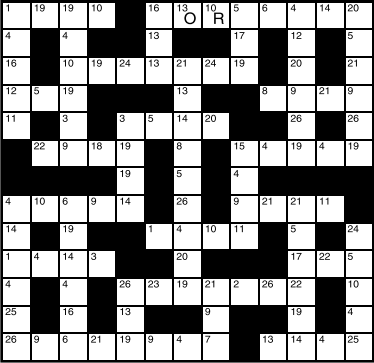
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BRAIN GYM No.385

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

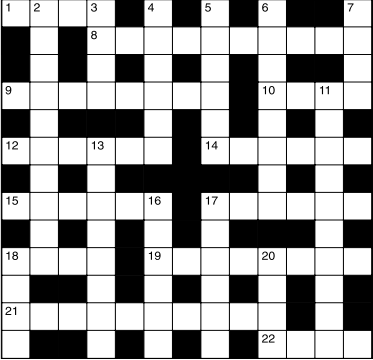


LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:
S Q N H O A G P C X L D B
V U K J Y Z F R T M E I W

Double Crossword

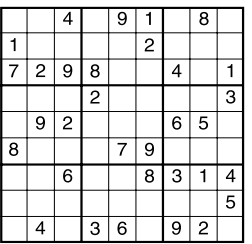
Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

- Cryptic Clues:**
- Across**
- Yet an organ won't go without it! (4)
 - Honest, as the chairman of the directors should be (5,5)
 - A father, for example, in better surroundings (8)
 - Travel permit for six to S. Africa, initially (4)
 - Quake in the centre, more or less (6)
 - Manage to show the way (6)
 - This system worked in medieval times (6)
 - Yet they may be men on board! (6)
 - It's a wine that's coming back (4)
 - Light wit, perhaps, but slightly illuminating (8)
 - Side line for the artist? (10)
 - Forced to be a servant, we hear (4)
- Down**
- Do as you're told and become a priest (4,6)
 - The head cook may make it (4)
 - Toiler disposed to belie his nature (6)
 - Dreaded being deafer, perhaps (6)
 - Study poetry, so to speak (8)
 - Not quite perfect thought (4)
 - It's used on watch (6-4)
 - An every-day conclusion (8)
 - Admit - or just the opposite! (3,3)
 - Leaves about fifty counterpanes (6)
 - It's found in tribal songs, too (4)
 - A particular piece of white marble (4)



- Quick Clues:**
- Across**
- Way (4)
 - Bizarre (10)
 - Estrange (8)
 - Dry (4)
 - Unfruitful (6)
 - Furrow (6)
 - Disappear (6)
 - To here (6)
 - Inform (4)
 - Sleep-producing (8)
 - Agree (10)
 - Pace (4)
- Down**
- Merge (10)
 - Stockings (4)
 - Filter (6)
 - Obvious (6)
 - Lying near (8)
 - Cast off (4)
 - Unbelievable (10)
 - Banter (8)
 - Upright (6)
 - Tear (6)
 - Change of course (4)
 - Probability (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 9 |
| 8 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| 4 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| 6 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 |
| 7 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 6 |
| 1 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| 9 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 |

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Aware; 8 Canals; 9 Tripoli; 10 Ruler; 12 Rhinoceros; 15 Perversity; 18 Repeal; 19 Pro rata; 21 Press on; 22 Logic. Down: 1 Waste paper; 2 Tact; 3 Memo; 4 Action; 5 Short cut; 6 Rollers; 11 Resistance; 13 Headless; 14 Prophet; 16 Supine; 17 Flange; 20 Oils. QUICK - Across: 7 Overt; 8 Elector; 9 Precade; 10 Agile; 12 Settlement; 15 Exasperate; 18 Tango; 19 Curator; 21 Austere; 22 Picks. Down: 1 Complacent; 2 Deter; 3 Style; 4 Recant; 5 Decadent; 6 Strikes; 11 Enterprise; 13 Employed; 14 Earnest; 16 Racket; 17 Stick; 20 Rapt.

Thinking space



Quiz

- Which group of minerals form the chief constituents of igneous rock?
- Which heartthrob went from EastEnders to a starring role in Heartbeat?
- Of what name has Britain had two kings and France ten?
- In which country were the first Commonwealth Games held in 1930?
- In which country was the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76?
- In which game may a player use the words j'adoube?
- In the 1990s, which Republic of Ireland footballer joined Liverpool as the country's most expensive defender?
- With what is philology concerned?
- Who wrote the opera Castor et Pollux in 1737?
- In which sport are Doggett's Coat and Badge awarded?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 John Paul Getty II; 2 Halibut; 3 Spain; 4 Nigel Hawthorne; 5 Dublin; 6 Carlos The Jackal; 7 Salicylic acid; 8 K2; 9 Colin MacInnes; 10 Erik 'The Red'.

Niner: REPUBLICS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

528 gives a sign of the Zodiac,
32946 gives a planet,
81789 gives a constellation.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show — see brochure/web page for details.

London is the natural home of theatre and the musical is king in the capital's world-famous West End. British musicals that prove a runaway success here, often go on to triumph on Broadway and around the globe. The winning combination of engaging writing, captivating stage design and commanding performance has enabled London theatres to achieve box office smashes time and time again.

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Saturday Night Theatre from £169.⁹⁵

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There's a selection of London hotels to choose from (supplements may apply) and rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday.

The ticket is for a Saturday evening performance.

Rail inclusive breaks – Three days

Theatre Showstopper from £239.⁹⁵

This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday returning on Sunday.

Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade, plus two nights stay at a four-star London hotel (supplements may apply).

Includes a top priced ticket for a Friday evening performance.

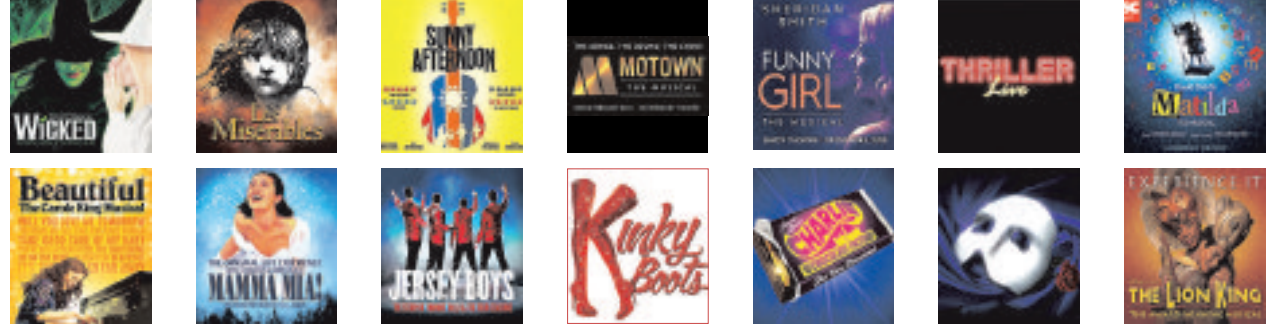
Coach inclusive breaks – Two days

Saturday Night from £149.⁹⁵

Theatre Weekend with Dinner from £159.⁹⁵

For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option, see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the evening performance (meal not included).

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The former pub is now the popular Royal Oak Indian Restaurant



Spacious – inside the Royal Oak Indian Restaurant



Plenty of choice in seating, with family and more private areas



The well-stocked bar has a varied selection

It's a right Royal treat at the Oak where Zack aims to reign

I DIDN'T come here to be insulted, I thought, as the waiter beckoned me with a 'Mongoose, sir!' So where would I usually go, you may ask?

I jest of course. That was my drink of choice at the Royal Oak, in Rushall, a former pub which has a new lease of life as an Indian restaurant.

Zahirul Islam pulls the strings in the tight-knit family-run operation, which also features two of his brothers and a cousin. He jokes that he is known as Zack to customers, friends and even his close family, simply because people struggled to spell, or even pronounce his name.

And that in itself gives an indication of the staff's attitude. They are a jocular crew, so it's easy to strike up a rapport with them.

We visited during Holy month, so while

Mark Shipp tucks in

the staff were on a fast, the delivery of our food was speedy. Usually the chef would test the ingredients before serving up, but, being Ramadan, could not. Instead, he had to use all his expertise to know exactly the right blend for our meals. It worked a treat.

For the record, I tried the machli tikka, pink salmon, served with coconut rice. The other half took her choice from the signature dishes and opted for the Manchurian chicken – which sounds like something Noel Gallagher would choose – served with mushroom rice.

Other exotic-sounding options from the same range include lamb pelli pelli, mustard fish and jinga delight, but there's an extensive menu, from a Royal mixed grill in the grilled section, to the more traditional choices or biryani dishes. Vegetarians are

catered for with the likes of paneer birbali, while omelette and chips and tarragon chicken feature among the English dishes.

The Royal Oak serves up a wider range of drinks than one would usually find at a licensed Indian restaurant, hence my choice of Mongoose. Both agreed our meals were delicious, and I was served a trout as an extra. Something fishy there, methinks.

Essence

But that was not our only treat. Desserts followed, by which time our hosts could end their fast, so they offered us a serving of the platter they were to enjoy. It was too much, especially after pudding, but it needed no second invitation as they kindly packed it up so we could enjoy it the next day.

Zack has tried to keep the essence of the building since taking on the former pub just six months ago. It had been a popular

establishment in its day and he was keen to bring it back into use. It's welcoming and adequately decorated and ambiently lit.

It has a separate room where customers can go just for a drink, or wait for a table in the restaurant itself. The main dining areas cater for up to 100 diners with an emphasis on families, though bigger parties and corporate events can be accommodated, too.

Our own position was in a prime location, in the far corner, looking out on adjacent field, watching people tend the horses or take them off for rides. Zack himself has taken the reins in his own field – and looks to be on to a winner.

The Royal Oak, Daw End, Rushall, is open on Sunday to Thursday from 5.30 to 11.30pm and on Friday and Saturday until 12.30am. Zack is even looking at introducing Sunday lunchtime dining and a Wednesday banquet evening. Call 01922 614947.

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Stunning family home close to delightful walks

Surrounded by beautiful open countryside, Swindon Cottage, High Street, Swindon, is a stunning substantial period detached family home close to delightful canal side walks.

Having incredibly deceptive accommodation, it is for sale through Taylors at £340,000.

The very spacious layout includes a beautifully re-fitted luxury breakfast/kitchen through conservatory, two large separate reception rooms, four excellent bedrooms, including the master with an impressive en-suite bathroom.

The property is set back beyond the broad front driveway leading to the large garage and to the rear a private and attractively landscaped cottage style garden is to be enjoyed. With gas central heating and double glazing it has a 20ft long reception hall with a light-wood style floor and a door to the garage and a door to the conservatory.

The luxury re-fitted kitchen/through conservatory is beautifully fitted with a superb range of pastel 'sage green' kitchen furniture. It includes a Belfast-style sink with period style mixer tap with solid wood butchers block work tops either side with cupboard/storage space and drawers below, an integrated double oven, integrated microwave, wall units, a tall larder style unit with integrated carousel storage and adjacent recess for fridge/freezer with wine rack above.

The peninsular unit opposite includes twin touch control electric hobs integrated into the 'Corian' work surface with large 'pan' drawers and cupboard/storage space below plus a stainless steel illuminating cooker hood above and breakfast bar. Within the conservatory area of the kitchen is space for breakfast table/chairs. French doors open to the rear garden and there is an 'old school' style radiator, contemporary style radiator, a further tall larder unit and tiled floor.

The utility/laundry room has complementary units/work surfaces and an integrated washing machine and dishwasher.

There is also a guest WC, a formal dining room with oak flooring and a log burner, a large front sitting room with a log burner style fire and oak flooring.

SWINDON, DUDLEY £340,000

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Stunning period home

Detached

Canal side walks

Beautiful re-fitted kitchen



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NEW

AMBLECOTE, High Street £775 pcm+Fees
A fantastic opportunity to rent a home on a select development. 'Crystal Gardens'. This home features a spacious lounge/dining area, well appointed kitchen, downstairs WC, the 1st floor has 2 bedrooms & a family bathroom & on the 2nd floor there is a master bedroom with a large en-suite. 2 allocated parking spaces, front & rear gardens. This property will not be available for long. Minimum contract 12 months. EPC: TBC



NEW PRICE

HALESOWEN, Broadway Avenue £725 pcm+Fees
Modern 3 bedroom semi-detached house centrally located within minutes of Halesowen Town Centre and features entrance hallway, lovely fitted kitchen, large living room, 3 double bedrooms, bathroom suite with separate shower, driveway parking. Not to be missed! EPC: D



NEW

HALESOWEN, Wassell Road £725 pcm+Fees
A large unfurnished semi-detached house in central Halesowen which features: entrance porch, lounge, fully fitted kitchen, covered side entrance, private rear garden, 3 good size bedrooms, large bathroom with shower over bath, garage & driveway. Also benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: TBC



LET

HALESOWEN, Meadowbrook Road £725 pcm+Fees
Large 3 bed mucklow style semi-detached property features: 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, 1 single, bathroom with shower, garage (storage only), private rear garden, driveway parking for multiple vehicles, gas central heating and double glazed. Ideally located for Huntingtree and Lutley Primary School. EPC: D



LET

HALESOWEN, Mayfield Road £695 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished detached bungalow set in a quiet cul-de-sac in this very popular residential area close to schools and bus links. Featuring large lounge, fitted kitchen, 2 double & 1 large bedroom, large bathroom, double glazing, front & rear gardens, garage. A property to be seen and appreciated. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Middlefield Avenue £650 pcm+Fees
Located in Hurst Green this unfurnished semi detached house comprising of 26ft through lounge/dining room, a fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms and a further single. Benefits from a garage and driveway with low maintenance gardens. Very popular area. Viewings highly recommended. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Surfeit Hill Road £645 pcm+Fees
A fully refurbished semi-detached home, briefly comprising of: Large lounge/diner with access to the garden, modern fitted kitchen, shower to bathroom, 3 bedrooms, double glazing, gas central heating, driveway & garage parking, rear garden. EPC: C



EDGBASTON, Shooters Close £575 pcm+Fees
Set in a quiet cul-de-sac. A stones throw away from Calthorpe Park. This semi-detached home comprising of: 2 double bedrooms, large lounge, large kitchen, family bathroom, double glazing, gas central heating, driveway parking and a garage, further benefits from front and rear gardens. EPC: D



LET ON FIRST VIEWING

HALESOWEN, Bloomfield Street West £575 pcm+Fees
A really well presented modern style 2 bedroom mid terraced house close to central Halesowen & bus links comprising of: Lounge, fitted kitchen, patio doors to rear garden, upstairs bathroom with shower, gas central heating, rear parking. EPC: TBC



NEW

WORDSFLEY, Wordsley Court £575 pcm+Fees
1st floor fully refurbished large apartment within walking distance of Wordsley Green & King George V park. Featuring lovely lounge, 2 generous size double bedrooms, fitted kitchen, shower room, secure parking to rear of property. EPC: C



LET

HALESOWEN, Brett Young Close £575 pcm+Fees
Beautifully presented and in the centre of Halesowen. A top floor unfurnished apartment which has modern decoration and set in a cul-de-sac features 2 good size bedrooms, modern kitchen, spacious lounge, lovely bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. An opportunity not to be missed! EPC: B



CRADLEY HEATH, Silverthorne Lane £525 pcm+Fees
A really well presented modern style 2 bedroom house close to Cradley Heath Train Station and bus links. Lounge with fireplace, large fitted kitchen with new oven/hob, patio doors to rear garden, upstairs bathroom with shower, gas central heating, driveway parking. Minimum 12 month contract. EPC: C



KIDDERMINSTER, Patin House £515 pcm+Fees
A 1 bedroom ground floor apartment set in a converted Victorian house comprising of: porch, lounge, fitted kitchen with appliances and granite work tops, double bedroom, fully tiled bathroom with shower, study, gas central heating (under floor heating to kitchen & bathroom) double glazing, communal gardens and allocated parking. Available Now! EPC: TBC



NEW

NETHERTON, Halesowen Road £495 pcm+Fees
A distinctive unfurnished detached nailer's cottage style home, briefly comprising of: 2 cosy reception rooms with feature Arga, 2 bedrooms, fitted kitchen with white goods, original Laura Ashley downstairs bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, garage and driveway parking, front and rear gardens. EPC: E



LET

OLDSWINFORD, Heath Lane £495 pcm+Fees
Ideally located in the centre of Oldswinford for shops, transport links and Mary Stevens Park. This large and spacious end terrace house features 3 good size bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, downstairs bathroom, upstairs toilet, fitted kitchen, enclosed rear garden and on road parking. EPC: E



CRADLEY HEATH, Seedhouse Court £495 pcm+Fees
Set within lovely private gardens. Ideally located for Old Hill train station, local shops and buses for Cradley Heath, Halesowen and Merry Hill, an unfurnished ground floor apartment features 2 double bedrooms, fitted kitchen with white goods, spacious lounge, house bathroom with shower, allocated parking. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Walton Court £450 pcm+Fees
A spacious 1st floor flat surrounded by maintained communal gardens in a popular location. Comprises entrance hall with storage cupboard, double bedroom, fitted kitchen with marble effect work surface, separate utility room, light and airy lounge, bathroom with shower over bath and shed. Available End of August/September. Garage not included. EPC: TBC



NEW

CRADLEY HEATH, King Street £440 pcm+Fees
Located in the heart of Old Hill. Ideally situated for local shops, buses and train links in this unfurnished 1st floor modern apartment which comprises of 1 double bedroom, fitted kitchen with a small fridge, spacious lounge, double glazing, electric storage heating, bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. EPC: C



NEW

CRADLEY HEATH, Elbow Street £425 pcm+Fees
Unfurnished 2nd floor flat in a popular area which is ideal for shops, buses and Old Hill Train Station. Featuring 1 double bedroom, electric storage heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, communal garden, allocated parking. EPC: TBC



STOURBRIDGE, Bagley Street £425 pcm+Fees
COMING SOON! 4 fully refurbished apartments (2 - ground floor & 2 - 1st floor) within a stones throw of Stourbridge town centre. The apartments feature an open plan lounge/living room, fitted kitchen, shower room, 1 double bedroom & private rear parking. Not to be missed! EPC: TBC



NEW

BILSTON, Loxdale Siddings £400 pcm+Fees
COMING SOON! 4 fully refurbished apartments (2 - ground floor & 2 - 1st floor) within a stones throw of Stourbridge town centre. The apartments feature an open plan lounge/living room, fitted kitchen, shower room, 1 double bedroom & private rear parking. Not to be missed! EPC: TBC

PROPERTY



A deceptively spacious four bedroom home

This deceptively spacious four bedroom home in Bishop Close, Dudley, is ideally located for public transport and road access into the main town and to the M5 motorway.

It is for sale through The Property Shop at £129,950.

This is literally an 'award winning property' as the builders in the 1970s won an award for the design.

DUDLEY

£129,950

It is in a quiet cul-de-sac in a residential area close to popular schools and local amenities.

Inside there is immaculately presented accommodation comprising of an entrance hallway,

a guest WC, plenty of storage, a large lounge, an impressive kitchen/diner, four bedrooms and a family bathroom on the first floor.

There is also a pleasant garden outside to the side.

For further information contact The Property Shop on 01384 456 022 or visit their website at www.thepropertyshop.co.uk



Well-presented semi-detached home includes a long driveway

UPPER GORNAL

£139,500

A well-presented three-bed semi-detached property situated in Brookdale, Upper Gornal, that includes double glazing and central heating, is for sale through Trinity Property at £139,500.

A long driveway to the front of the property with plenty of off road parking leads to the entrance of the property.

The entrance hall, which has stairs to the first floor landing, also has doors to a lounge/diner, kitchen, with door to a rear lobby and downstairs WC.

Off the first floor are three good sized bedrooms and a house bathroom, and to the rear there is a patio area and terraced garden with access to the front through a side gate.

Contact Trinity Property on 01384 213395 or visit the site www.trinityproperty.net





Five-bedroom house is close to Warley Woods

BEARWOOD
£299,000

Situated in Thuree Road, Bearwood, this property is available for offers in the region of £299,000.

On the market via estate agent Derek Spires it sits close to Warley Wood. his freehold extended semi-detached property has gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation with five bedrooms, master bedroom having en suite bathroom, family bathroom, hallway, downstairs cloakroom, front lounge, extended sitting room, fantastic extended kitchen, side garage and garden to the rear, having the benefit of off-street parking and with viewing essential according to the agent.

The agents stress the need to view this property in order to appreciate how much space the extension has helped create. Call the Bearwood office on 0121 420 4646 or visit the website at www.derekspiresandco.com



Spacious home has its own self-contained granny annexe

SEDGLEY
£350,000

<<<

A unique, highly individual and spacious detached property in Wilton Close, Sedgley comes with a self contained granny annexe.

It is for sale through Taylors at £350,000.

Built around 1998 on a corner plot with views it has gas central heating and double glazing.

It has a 31ft reception hall, three stores, cloakroom/WC, an elegant 17ft lounge, dining room, breakfast kitchen, three bedrooms (one with a bathroom en-suite), shower room and a integral garage.

The annexe has an entrance vestibule, living/dining room, inner hallway, kitchen, double bedroom with a shower room en suite.

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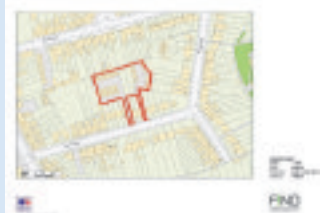
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Index

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- 10 Personals

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1

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late, private fishing club house.
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3 Home & Services

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equestrian corner

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pets corner

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than that of the breeder.
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liability should readers
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very friendly,
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Microchipped, was wearing
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Please check sheds/garages
Please call 07823 557740

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5 Business & Farming

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6 Property

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8
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£3,895 ono

07967 779910.

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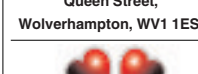
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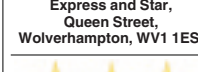
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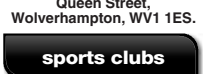
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Sandwell and Walsall battle it out on the track during the Black Country School Games



Jaiden Gamble of George Salter Academy races home



Gabriel Stone, of Whitgreave Infants, Wolverhampton, does the racket balance



A Walsall youngster takes the javelin challenge

Games on! Sport is the winner for youngsters

MORE than 1,400 youngsters from across the region joined forces for a festival of sport at the Black Country School Games in Walsall.

A host of different sports were on offer for the primary and secondary school pupils, who all came through qualifying stages to reach the final showpiece.

The Black Country School Games was being held for the seventh time and saw 9,000 children participate this year alone.

The event has grown at such a rapid rate over its short existence that the 2016 finals – which were held at the University of Wolverhampton's Walsall campus – welcomed their 10,000th competitor. Reedswood Primary's Paris Ebbans was awarded a unique trophy by a special guest, Wolverhampton's double Paralympic athlete Darren Harris, to mark the milestone.

Artificial

In all, 82 schools, from the boroughs of Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton battled it out across 12 different sports, including athletics, rounders, multi-skills, cricket, tri-golf, rugby, football, dodgeball and a triathlon. These were contested in the sports hall, on the artificial pitches and full-scale athletics track.

At the end of it all, the green shirts of Sandwell lifted the trophy.

Black Country BeActive headed the event. Paul Wicker, one of the organisers from Walsall Council, said: "It's sport for young people, delivered by young people."

He added: "The idea is to create a mini-Olympics for the Black Country, and to have an opening ceremony it adds to it and makes it different for them."

The first Games were held in 2010 at Wolverhampton's Aldersley Leisure Village. BeActive director Simon Hall has seen first-hand how the Black Country School Games have grown in stature.

SPORTING FEATURE

By Lewis Cox

"The Games are all about young people setting out what they want to achieve in school sports in the region."

"We're not looking for the most elite athletes in schools, we're looking for ways to get more children active in sport," he said. "The Black Country Games gives young people a chance to experience that sort of multi-event experience, not quite the Olympics, but something they can really treasure."

"What's been really special is being able to identify the pupil who was the 10,000th competitor, which is a huge achievement."

"The Games are all about young people setting out what they want to achieve in school sports in the region."

A former ambassador for the Games was Joel Richards, who was tragically killed in Tunisia while on a family holiday just over a year ago.

Joel attended Stuart Bathurst Catholic School in Wednesbury and played a huge part in local sport in the Black Country.

The day's trophy, lifted by Sandwell, was named after the former Black Country referee and presented by Joel's brother Owen, also a recently qualified offi-

cial. Wicker explained how the games have developed and how the organisers and leaders try to follow the mentality of school sports while delivering such an event.

Friends and volunteers of Joel were gathered to raise funds for the 'Smile for Joel' appeal, a charity that aids victim support.

Kallianne Titley and her brother were friends with Joel and she explained how such a monumental sporting event proved a perfect fit.

She said: "Sport was what Joel did best and that's what he wanted people to do."

Remember

"Every time I saw Joel it was through sport, whether it was helping him by being a guinea pig when he finished his A-Levels or organising an event or football, it was what he did."

"There is no better way to remember him. I was younger and competed here when he was an ambassador so I know he'd be really proud of what everyone's doing."

Schools representing Sandwell were: George Salter, Sandwell Academy, Q3 Academy, Bristnall Hall, Uplands Manor, Moat Farm, Pennyhill, Oldbury, St Phillips, Langley, Gelefield, Tipton Green, Lyng, Hargate, Abbey Junior, St Pauls, ACE Academy, St Michaels, Hollylodge and Wood Green Academy.

Schools representing Dudley: Leasowes, Old Swinford, Bishop Milner, Ellowes, Manor Way, Glynne, Windsor, Dudley Wood, Woolecote, Milking Bank, Maidensbridge, Church of the Ascension, Hagley, Sutton, Summerhill and OSH.

Schools representing Walsall: St Francis, Shire Oak Academy, Pool Hayes, Jane Lane, Castle, Lindens, Barcroft, Blue Coat, Walsall Academy, Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy, Whetstone Field, New Invention, Holy Trinity, Birchills, Butts, Reedswood, Cooper and Jordan, Beacon, St John's, The Jane Lane School, The Stretey Academy and Brownhills.

Schools representing Wolverhampton: Highfields, St Peter's Collegiate, Wolverhampton Grammar School, Oak Meadow, Fieldview, Uplands Junior, St Michaels Catholic, Northwood Park, Wolverhampton Girls, St Peter and St Paul, Whitgreave Infant, Woodthorne, Bilston, Christ Church, St Stephens, St Andrews, St Michaels Q of E, Aldersley, Moreton, Our Lady and St Chad, Colton Hills, South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy, Coppice and The Royal School.



The 100m is raced on the track at the University of Wolverhampton's Walsall campus



The chase is on for Bradley Walsh from Field View School, Wolverhampton in the hoop run



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Show goes on with town hall fight bill

TYSON Fury versus Wladimir Klitschko may have been delayed, but the show is most definitely on at Walsall Town Hall that same evening.

The 'Summer Scorchers', promoted by Errol Johnson's Black Country Boxing, was due to take place with the world heavyweight multi-title fight on July 9. But Fury's withdrawal through injury means the BoxNation bill at the Manchester Arena will be postponed.

Fight fans in Walsall can still get their fix with a busy 10-contest card.

Top of the bill in an eight-rounder will be Halesowen's Lennox Clarke, who will get an opportunity to make it a dozen wins without reply. The super middleweight has raced to 11 victories – with four inside the distance – and takes on Dean Gillen of Nottinghamshire.

The supporting cast includes Tipton's Lee Glover, rebuilding again, after losing two title opportunities. He's been beaten twice for English super feather honours and the Midlands crown at feather and appears on a Town Hall bill for the first time since November 2014, against Jordan Ellison.

Unbeaten middleweight Tom Stokes is targeting his seventh win, up against busy scrapper Lewis van Poetsch. Fellow West Bromwich fighter, super featherweight Jack Summers goes toe-to-toe with Brett Fido.

Wolverhampton's Joshua Burke steps back through the firsts for the first time since his spirited six-round cruiserweight defeat to the useful Courtney Richards in Plymouth. He and Luke Heron (Walker), have yet to be paired.

Season's first away league win boosts hopes of play-offs

CRADLEY secured their first away league points of the season with a 52-38 win at Rye House to bolster their play-off bid on Sunday night.

It was Cradley's second away win in a row after an impressive 47-43 Challenge win at Sheffield. Ben Basford suffered concussion and whiplash in a heat 11 crash and faces a spell on the sidelines.

Meanwhile, chairman Nigel Pearson hit out at 'amateurish' behaviour after the Heathens were awarded the points from the cancelled match at Mildenhall – according to the Fen Tigers' website.

The June 19 trip was cancelled by home promoter Kevin Jolly after Cradley – as permitted – called on Matt Williamson to replace Luke Chessell, who had no machinery.

Mildenhall were hauled before a Speedway Control Bureau disciplinary hearing, with the website saying Cradley were awarded the points and Jolly given a suspended £250 fine.

Pearson said: "I find it quite amateurish that officials of other clubs have started to debate on social media, based on what they have read on the website."

Academy puts gridiron on the map



Members of the Black Country Vipers Academy, based at Ellowes Hall Sports College

THE West Midlands' only American football academy is aiming to make a real difference to the lives of young people in the area.

The Black Country Academy of American Football, based at Ellowes Hall Sports College in Dudley, has launched youth and junior sides ahead of joining the British American Football League next year.

The teams are aimed at youngsters aged 14 to 16, and then up to 19, with around 40 aspiring players already taking part in training twice a week.

The academy is looking to cater for all ability levels, and even for those who may not wish to

By Joe Edwards

continue playing when they reach senior level. Academy CEO Stuart Potts-Perkins said: "It's all about progression for the youngsters, giving them a platform."

The Vipers youth and junior sides will play the contact sport but flag football, a variation of the game similar to tag rugby, is to be provided in the future for children as young as seven.

Summer training is on Wednesdays from 7.30 to 9pm and Sundays from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Winter sessions are on Sundays only.

MYERS PREDICTS EXCITING FINISH

HALESOWEN batsman Jack Myers is predicting an exciting second half of the season for his new club.

Myers, who recently made the switch from Eastnor, continued his good form with a classy 93 in the winning draw with Old Elizabethans last weekend.

They face Wombourne at Seth Somers Park on Saturday in a confident mood with plenty of league points to be gained before the end of the season.

Said Myers: "It was good to get another decent innings under my belt and I'm really enjoying the switch to Halesowen."

"We are in a good rhythm now and the second half of the season should be exciting for us as it's all to play for with the division being so tight."

"We are just 30 points off the top with some key games coming in the next few weeks so we have some big games to play."

Myers had good support from Will Barrett on 77 as Halesowen carded 269-5 from 55 overs.

Burst

Old Elizabethans made a flying start in reply and were 97-1 after just 15 overs. But skipper Richard Brooker bagged 3-37 to peg them back and Eddie Rhodes enjoyed a burst of 4-63 to ensure the winning draw and 15 points.

It wasn't such a good day for the second team who were humbled by Wolverhampton at home and face a relegation battle.

They were given a batting lesson by the visitors after Halesowen just crept over the 200 mark in the 50th over.

Wolverhampton reached the target with six overs in hand, losing just four wickets.

There was better news for the thirds with a win over Oldswinford after hitting 262-3 with Hayden Evans on 85 and Shaz Gill unbeaten on 79. Nathan Hines took 3-14 to help bowl out the opposition for just 155.

The fourth XI also remain top of the table with a 90-run win over Oldswinford.

The club have unveiled details of their multi-sport summer camps with bookings at £20 per day or £80 for the week from July 27 throughout August available now via Chris Jones on 07950 715832 or email chrisjones12@yahoo.co.uk for further details.

Cyclists wheel in more success



The stars of Halesowen's Cycling Academy. Picture: Chris Mason

HALESOWEN Cycling Club's memorable season continued as a return to the two-day stage race led to more success for the Manor Way outfit.

Following the West Midlands Regional Series event, hosted by Stourbridge and held at Stourport's Sports Village, Halesowen lead the overall standings ahead of Rhino Velo.

Charles Walker was able to pick up his first category licence from British Cycling, while Oliver Dighton reached the points required for his second category licence.

The prologue, a short time trial designed to split the field, saw Walker cross the line first in three minutes and 47 seconds. The faster

riders entered the first criterium, and Walker, who currently leads the South Staffordshire and Shropshire Cycling Clubs Road Racing League individual standings, powered home ahead of former Halesowen rider, and now pro star Callum Ferguson with Jack Stanton-Warren in fourth.

A strong final corner from Joe Hobbs set him up for a powerful finish in the second criterium, pulling away from the pack to claim second.

The 70-mile road race, held on day two at the Astley circuit, saw Stanton-Warren claim second behind Ferguson – with the total points revealing the pair had landed the one-two positions overall.

Jordanne's sights set on Rio gold

HALESOWEN'S wheelchair tennis star Jordanne Whiley is targeting a Paralympic gold to add to her bulging collection after Rio qualification was confirmed.

The 24-year-old still has a Wimbledon singles and doubles tournament to enjoy before setting her mind on South America – but she revealed gold is very much on her radar.

British No 1 Whiley, already a singles Grand Slam champion after winning the US Open last year, will face the country's No 2 Lucy Shuker at Wimbledon today (Thursday) – the tournament's first wheelchair singles event.

Whiley and Japan's Yui Kamiji, already seven-time Grand Slam doubles champions, will then begin their campaign for a third successive Wimbledon doubles title against Britain's Louise Hunt

and Marjolein Buis of Holland – before Whiley concentrates on Rio, her third Paralympic Games.

She said: "I will treat singles and doubles equally but this will be the first time where I will have a realistic chance of winning a singles gold medal – so that's a really big goal of mine."

"Olympic gold is one thing missing from my career. Rio is a hard court and my favourite surface."

"The two games have been so different in Beijing and London. I was so young in China and not very experienced. There weren't many crowds really and it was quite low on the atmosphere."

"But in London it was the complete opposite so it's going to be interesting to see what Rio has to offer."

Swimmers in the mix for promotion

HALESOWEN swimmers are in contention to win back promotion to the Nuneaton Junior League Division One after suffering relegation last year.

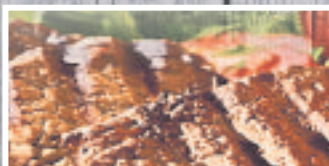
Following the final round in division two at Rugby, Halesowen finish third in the 23-strong division to win a place in the Junior League final.

William Walker and Jacob Bailey were double event winners; Ryan Worton, Anthony Demtry and Adam Ryan all won individual swims and the boys relay teams also tasted success with three medley wins and one in the freestyle.

The girls and boys 8x1 length mixed age group teams were also successful.

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